Building on Our Success

Strategic Plan 2005 -2015

Department of Education, Culture and Employment

Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment

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Minister's Message

I am very pleased to introduce *Building on Our Success*, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's third Strategic Plan. This plan provides a framework for our activities over the next decade until 2015, and sets out a series of goals that reflect the concerns of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Our Territory is changing quickly. More than ever, it is clear that a solid education is essential for all Northerners. Effective early learning and school programs are needed to give children opportunities to grow and develop. Further education and training must be a priority for adults, so all Northerners can take advantage of employment opportunities.

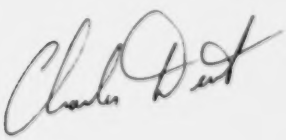
At the same time, it is critical to nurture and protect our cultural heritage so that we do not lose the knowledge, skills and history that make us unique. Given the rate of change in the North, our languages and traditions are under considerable pressure. We must work together to celebrate and strengthen the cultures that have served generations of Northerners.

The goals in this Strategic Plan are the result of extensive consultation with Northerners. Over the past few years, you have told us what you want and need through survey responses, focus groups, public meetings and other correspondence. I appreciate your response. You will see in this plan that we have heard what you had to say.

This plan builds on two previous plans. The recommendations of our first plan in 1984, *Learning: Tradition and Change in the Northwest Territories*, led to the creation of our divisional boards of education and Aurora College, both essential parts of our education system today. Our second plan, *People: Our Focus for the Future*, was developed in 1994 when the Department of Education had expanded to become the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Goals set out in that plan led to extension of culture, education and career development services in Northern communities.

This 2005 Plan recognizes both the strengths and weaknesses of our past actions. It celebrates the success enjoyed by many who have accessed our programs and services, and proposes ways to build on that success.

We are looking forward to working with our partners and the citizens of the Northwest Territories to address the challenges and celebrate the successes that the next decade will bring.



Charles Dent
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment
2005

Plan at a Glance

Education, Culture and Employment's New Strategic Framework

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE)'s new strategic framework outlines our priorities and the actions we will take in the next decade. It sets out our purpose, and five broad results-based goals we plan to reach within the next decade.

ECE's mandate has broadened greatly since our first strategic plan in 1984. In addition to the school system, the Department is now responsible for a network of education, cultural and employment supports and programming, including college programming, income support, official languages, labour services and career development. These activities are tied together by the shared aim of assisting Northerners to achieve their full potential.

The purpose and goals outlined in this Plan are designed to give Northerners increased opportunity to live fulfilled lives and contribute to a strong, healthy and vibrant Northern

society. To ensure that we are achieving what we set out to do, the Plan also establishes indicators to answer these important questions:

- How are we doing?
- Are we achieving our purpose?
- Have we given Northerners what they have asked for?

Turning Our Plan into Action

Our vision of *Northern people leading fulfilled lives and contributing to a strong and prosperous society* remains the driving force behind the strategic direction we have set. We need leadership, sound management, strong partnerships and an effective planning and implementation process to fulfill this vision.

During the planning process, we asked our partners, clients, colleagues, employees and political leaders to give us their perceptions of our strengths and weaknesses—what we were doing well and where we needed to improve. Through these frank discussions, we learned more about about who we are, what our partners need and how our operating environment will change in the coming years.

To reach our goals, we need to ensure our programs and services are matched to the needs of Northerners. We need to adjust our organizational structure, hire people who have the skills we will need in the future, evaluate the facilities and technology we use and build a system to track and report progress.

Although our methods may change, our vision and focus will remain the same. Our consultations have made it clear that people want us to continue to focus on lifelong learning, strengthening languages and cultures and supporting communities and individuals to make decisions that affect their own residents and families. This Plan will help Northerners measure our activities to ensure that we remain true to our vision. We may find new methods of getting there, but our goals are clear and will remain constant.

This Strategic Plan is the product of an effective collaboration and consultation, not only over the last year, but over 10 years of brainstorming and consensus building. This resulting Plan represents a commitment by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to the people of the NWT.

Purpose

To invest in and provide for the development of the people of the Northwest Territories, enabling them to reach their full potential, to lead fulfilled lives and to contribute to a strong and prosperous society.

Goals	Pride in Our Culture	Education of Children and Youth	Education of Adults	A Skilled and Productive Work Environment	People Participating Fully in Society
Objectives	1. Preservation and knowledge of our heritage 2. Promotion of the arts 3. Support and promote our official languages	1. A strong foundation for learning 2. Students achieving their potential 3. A results-based education system	1. Access and choice for adult learners 2. A responsive college 3. An integrated adult learning network	1. Northerners making informed career choices 2. A skilled workforce 3. A productive work environment	1. An integrated system of program supports 2. A comprehensive system of financial supports 3. A responsive income security system

Cross-Goal Strategies

1. Strong and Effective Partnerships

ECE is committed to strengthening local, territorial and federal partnerships, and working collaboratively to address problems and achieve results.

2. High Quality Human Resources

ECE is committed to developing a skilled, productive civil service that represents the people it serves.

3. Responsive Information Systems

ECE is committed to the collection, analysis and provision of information about its programs and services through systems that are responsive, reliable, available, and serviceable.

4. Facilities that Match Program Delivery Requirements

ECE is committed to defining and addressing additional facility requirements.

5. Effective Performance Planning, Monitoring and Measurement

ECE is committed to managing itself effectively, ensuring that it spends responsibly, develops transparent decision-making processes, monitors and reports on its progress, and is accountable for results.

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Our Vision and Values – Our Commitment to Northerners

Vision

Our vision describes how we believe our society should look if we are successful in our work. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment's vision is:

Northern people leading fulfilled lives and contributing to a strong and prosperous society.

Purpose

Having defined our vision, it is important to be clear about the role that we play as an organization. We do not act alone. Individuals, groups and organizations contribute to people's success. Based on what we have heard, our purpose is:

To invest in and provide for the development of the people of the Northwest Territories, enabling them to reach their full potential, to lead fulfilled lives and to contribute to a strong and prosperous society.

Values

We are committed to reflecting certain values in our work. These values guide how we will work with each other and with those we serve. Our values include:

Service – *We are committed to giving our clients our very best*

Integrity – *We believe that our words should become our actions*

Respect – *We treat others as we would have them treat us*

Compassion – *We demonstrate sensitivity for the people we serve*

Leadership – *We understand that leadership means teamwork*

Learning – *We foster a passion for lifelong learning*

Accountability – *We use our resources wisely*

Partnership – *We share responsibilities and work with others*

Excellence – *We strive for success in all that we do*

Principles

Based on our values, ECE has established principles to guide our activities. These principles are:

- *The languages and cultures of the NWT are valued and serve as the foundation for the development and delivery of programs and services.*
- *Our programs and services provide equitable access for all residents of the Northwest Territories and should not restrict their mobility.*
- *Our programs and services are integrated to the greatest extent possible into an effective, efficient and economic continuum.*
- *ECE ensures effective communication with its partners and involves them in decision-making related to its programs and services.*
- *Our programs and services are responsive to the changing social, economic, political and constitutional environment of the NWT.*
- *We strive to work cooperatively with Aboriginal governments, community governments, business and industry, organizations representing employees, non-government organizations as well as the Government of Canada.*

Our Programs and Staff – Who We Are and What We Do

ECE has the mandate to ensure residents of the Northwest Territories have access to high quality programs and services in early childhood; education, training and employment; labour market; certification and financial supports. In keeping with the priorities of Northern leaders and elders, an appreciation of the languages, cultures and heritage of Northern peoples forms the foundation of our programs and services.

Our Programs and Services

ECE encourages Northerners to learn and grow by providing a range of programs and services that:

1. Promote and support the enhancement and preservation of the languages, cultures and heritage of the Northwest Territories, including exercising responsibility for implementing the *Official Languages Act*.

2. Promote and support childhood development, including the development of preschool children.

3. Develop, monitor and enforce standards for education achievement, including graduation requirements.

4. Provide counselling, support services and information resources to enable individuals to pursue education, training and employment opportunities and to make productive choices.

5. Provide quality assurance to the public through accrediting programs and services and through occupational and trades certification, including the licensing of teachers and the licensing of childcare facilities.

6. Analyze labour force developments and implement responsive strategies designed to achieve meaningful employment for Northerners.

7. Deliver statutory programs to ensure that supports are available to assist individuals in meeting their basic financial needs.

8. Develop and enforce legislation, policies and agreements that regulate and manage the integrity of the Northwest Territories education system.

9. Represent the Government of the Northwest Territories and coordinate the government's involvement in territorial, national and inter-governmental matters related to education, early childhood education, training, official languages, culture, labour, and employment.

Our activities fall into five basic areas:

1. Culture, Heritage and Languages

Elders, community members and leaders have often emphasized the significance of the culture, heritage and languages of Northern people. ECE integrates the Aboriginal and Northern perspective into all of its work. The Department is responsible for preserving, promoting and enhancing the arts, cultural heritage, and official languages of the NWT. We do this by managing the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, the NWT Archives, geographic names and education extension programs, French translation services, promoting indigenous languages, and supporting the NWT Arts Council, the arts community and culture and heritage organizations.

Work in this area is essential because of its direct benefit to all residents and because it serves as a foundation for study in early learning and education programs.

2. Early Childhood and Schools

ECE provides programs, services and financial support for the delivery of early learning and childcare, as well as school programs across the NWT. The Department is responsible for the development of program standards, provision of support programs, culturally relevant curriculum, measurement of student progress, and development of education bodies. We are tasked with ensuring that children develop the basic academic learning, life skills, and knowledge required to become full participants in the communities in which they live.

ECE is also responsible for the coordination and maintenance of the NWT Public Library System. Libraries are essential to the development of literacy at a young age and support literacy through the adult years.

3. Adult and Postsecondary Education

ECE provides financial support and direction for the delivery of postsecondary programs and services to ensure that NWT residents have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to participate fully as productive citizens in Northern communities.

ECE works closely with Aurora College, other GNWT departments, Aboriginal organizations, the federal government and private sector employers to promote adult and postsecondary education in the NWT. We are also committed to addressing the literacy needs of Northerners from early childhood to the senior years and to increasing awareness of the importance of literacy in all of the NWT's eleven official languages.

4. Employment and Labour

ECE provides a variety of career, employment and labour programs and services intended to ensure that NWT residents have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to participate fully in the Northern economy.

The Department works closely with industry, labour organizations and Aurora College in the areas of apprenticeship training, trades, and occupational certification. We also work in partnership with other GNWT departments, Aboriginal organizations, and the federal government, private sector trainers and employers to encourage the development of a Northern workforce.

5. Income Security

The income security programs offered by ECE provide financial support to residents of the NWT. Financial assistance is available through a range of programs that are designed to meet the needs of students, seniors, and families. These programs recognize the importance of family and community in promoting self-reliance. Programs are supported by counselling and skill development activities that focus on helping people to make productive choices that are right for them.

Our Staff

ECE is one of 12 GNWT departments providing programs and services to NWT residents. The Department accounts for about 25% of all GNWT expenditures and directly employs 195 staff.

The Department funds education authorities and agencies tasked with the delivery of approved programs and services. Education authorities and Aurora College employ about 1,040 employees. When combined, the staff of ECE and its authorities and agencies account for nearly 25% of the public servants supported by GNWT funding.

Program Delivery

ECE directly delivers programs and services through its six career centres, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and the NWT Public Library Service.

Career Centres

ECE delivers its employment and labour and income security programs and services through career centres, located in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Hay River, Fort Smith and Yellowknife. These centres offer a range of career development programs and services to students and unemployed or under-employed Northerners.

Programs and services include on-the-job training, apprenticeship, and programs for income support recipients. Career centres also provide a range of income security programs for students, families, parents, seniors, and persons with disabilities. They serve as the first point of contact for members of the public looking for information regarding departmental programs and services.

Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre

The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre collects and maintains objects and archival records related to the culture and history of the Northwest Territories.

The Centre supports community and Aboriginal groups in documenting information about the cultures and history of the Northwest Territories. Museum staff also provide professional museum, archives and cultural resource management services. The Centre

also supports the operation of several local museums such as the Northern Life Museum in Fort Smith and the Norman Wells Historical Centre in Norman Wells.

The Northwest Territories Public Library Services

Under the direction of the Territorial Librarian, located in Hay River, the Northwest Territories Public Library Services (NWTPLS) provides leadership in the management of public library services throughout the Northwest Territories.

NWTPLS maintains a territory-wide information system through libraries in Fort Providence, Tulita, Norman Wells, Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Hay River, Fort Smith, Hay River Dene Reserve and Yellowknife. It also supports the operation of virtual libraries in Aklavik, Diavik, Deline, Edzo, Enterprise, Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Fort McPherson, Holman, Lutsel K'e, Rae, Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk, Wekweèti and Whatì.

Departmental Agencies and Partner Organizations

The majority of ECE's programs and services are delivered by education authorities and Aurora College – organizations that are established by legislation.

Education Authorities

Eight education authorities administer school programs for more than 9,500 students, in 52 schools, across 33 communities. These include five divisional education councils, two district education authorities in Yellowknife, and the commission scolaire francophone de division to serve French first language students.

Education authorities are led by elected representatives. They derive their authority from the *NWT Education Act* and associated regulations.

Aurora College

Aurora College, established under the *Public Colleges Act*, is the primary delivery agent for adult and postsecondary education in the Northwest Territories. Its programs are designed to address the needs of the Northern workforce and economy, and

include basic adult education, skilled-based training, certificate, diploma and degree programming. These programs are offered at three campuses in Inuvik, Fort Smith and Yellowknife, as well as at community learning centres in most NWT communities. Through its Aurora Research Institute, the College licenses research activities as well as supporting science, technology and research projects, in cooperation with the business and scientific communities. The College serves about 1,200 full-time equivalent students annually.

The college is directed by a Board of Governors appointed by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Non-government Organizations

ECE partners with numerous non-government and community-based organizations, through a series of contribution agreements, to support the delivery of programs and services across the NWT. These include shelter, library, language, arts, cultural, early learning and childcare, literacy and private school programs and services. Many of these organizations have unique access to the people of the NWT and help ensure a broad scope of programs are readily available.

GNWT Social Program Departments

ECE also works closely with all other GNWT Departments to deliver its programs and services. In particular, it collaborates with other social programs departments such as the departments of Health and Social Services, Justice, NWT Housing Corporation, and Municipal and Community Affairs.

Federal Government Departments

ECE collaborates with a variety of federal government departments, including Human Resources and Skills Development Canada; Department Indian Affairs and Northern Development; Citizenship and Immigration Canada; and Canadian Heritage. Under these partnerships, ECE may jointly manage services or deliver services on behalf of federal departments.

Our Operating Environment – A look at what's happening around us

Our Strategic Plan is based not only on the past, but also on the future. The following pages present our projections for the future.

Our Changing Environment

The NWT is undergoing considerable economic, political and social change. Aboriginal land claims and self-government initiatives and economic development are among the factors that are re-shaping Northern society. These changes offer new opportunities to Northerners, and will require a change in the way ECE does business.

After consulting with Northerners, we have identified the six key challenges we expect to face in the next 10 years:

1. Changing Population

The NWT is growing faster than many other areas of Canada. On April 1, 2004, Statistics Canada estimated the population of the Northwest Territories at 42,274 persons, showing an annual growth rate of 1.3%, compared to .9% for Canada.

Our birth rate is slowing down, with 30.2% fewer births in 2005 than in 1995 (figures adjusted to take into account division of the NWT). At the same time, the number of seniors is increasing. People over the age of 60 currently represent about 6% of the population and this is expected to double over the next 20 years.

There is also a continuing trend toward urbanization in the Northwest Territories. Overall, Yellowknife has increased from 28.6% of the territorial population in 1976 to 44.6% in 2003 (figures adjusted for division of the NWT). Movement to other regional centres has occurred at a slower rate.

These changes suggest that careful consideration of current programs and services will be required. Given the changing nature of the population, programs and services will need to be adjusted and priorities may change. Additionally, new approaches to program delivery may be required.

2. Resource Development

The NWT Bureau of Statistics states the overall annual economic growth rate for the NWT is around 10% (compared with 1.7% for the rest of Canada), largely as a result of activity in the mining, oil and gas industries. With the opening of the Snap Lake Diamond Mine in 2006 and the potential development of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline later in the decade, this growth is expected to continue through the planning period. The construction of the pipeline alone could represent the greatest short-term economic boom in the history of the NWT.

The continued growth pattern can be expected to have profound impacts on some aspects of departmental programs. Adjustments will need to be made to training and employment programs to respond to industry and business needs.

3. Availability of Human Resources

The GNWT faces human resource challenges both as the largest territorial employer and as the organization responsible for shaping policy to stimulate economic growth and establish the NWT as a desirable place to work.

In the current economic climate, there is a wide range of job opportunities – and this is expected to be the case throughout the period covered by the Strategic Plan. Job opportunities will exist in the resource sector and related businesses, as well as in government and the service industry. At present, there are critical skill shortages in some occupations. With potential development associated with the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, it may be difficult to meet labour demands in the future. Education continues to be a key determinant of people's employment levels as the odds of employment increase as education levels increase.

4. Social Growth and Development

Identifying and effectively addressing social issues and challenges is essential to the future growth and development of the NWT. These matters are now being openly discussed and people are urging governments to work together to address them. Communities, families and individuals now have greater access to the tools they need to cope with both the direct behaviours and impacts of social dysfunction.

There is a high priority placed on addressing social issues. Actions to identify root causes and to establish enhanced, effective programs and services continue to be a goal of community, regional, territorial and national governments.

5. Fiscal Constraints

The present constrained financial situation of the GNWT offers limited flexibility to expand existing programs and services or develop new activities. As a result, ECE must continue to invest carefully and focus on positive, preventative approaches. Over time, preventative action will reduce the necessity of costly remedial measures in the area of education and training. Limited finances also increase the importance of developing efficient coordination and partnerships both between government departments and with other partners, most notably parents, non-governmental organizations and emerging Aboriginal governments.

6. Changing Governance in the NWT

Aboriginal self-government agreements, potential devolution of land and water resources from the Government of Canada to the NWT and pressures associated with economic development will mean changes to the way the NWT is governed. Our system of governance is becoming more complex, and as Northern Aboriginal self-government agreements are signed the responsibility for services and programs will be devolved to different levels of government. This will require collaboration, effective communication and efficient coordination of programs and services.

Pride In Our Culture, Heritage and Languages

Culture, heritage and language are the foundation for learning.

We begin, at an early age, to understand the world through the lens provided by our culture and heritage. As we develop our language skills we begin to describe the world around us using words and grammar. Language shapes how we express ourselves and is essential to forming and understanding ideas and concepts.

The NWT has a rich fabric of culture, language and heritage. This is recognized by the fact that the NWT has eleven official languages. ECE, along with partners such as families and communities, has an important role to play in ensuring that the profound importance of culture, language and heritage is reflected in all aspects of Northern life.

During the development of this Plan we heard that it is essential to ensure that activities related to culture, language and heritage form an integral part of the ECE's responsibilities. People emphasized the importance of recognizing and celebrating the diversity of

Culture

the NWT by working with communities to record and document histories, historic places, traditions and culture. People also wanted ECE, and the GNWT as a whole, to show leadership in supporting language, arts and heritage activities through a wide variety of programs and services.

Objectives

1. *Preservation and Knowledge of our Heritage*
2. *Promotion of the Arts*
3. *Support & Promote our Official Languages*

Vision

Northerners who are knowledgeable about and proud of their culture.

21st Century Environment

Heritage

Heritage refers to those aspects of our culture that we inherit from earlier generations. Knowing where we come from helps to ground us in the present and to prepare us for the future.

In the NWT, people are the main repositories of heritage information. Many Elders, who have lived much of their life on the land, have a profound knowledge of the heritage of the past generations. This information is essential in understanding how things were done in the past and why the past is important to the future. With the passing of Elders, the globalization of communications and thought, and the reduced focus on some traditions, we may well lose much of this traditional knowledge. Such loss would have a great impact on the people of the NWT.

Archaeological and historical sites and culturally significant areas are also important parts of our heritage. They, too, are at risk of being lost as the pace of northern resource development increases. The proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline, mines, roads, municipal expansion and other types of development have the potential to damage the record of human occupation in the NWT. As a result, careful work with communities throughout the NWT is required to ensure that historical places are identified and protected.

We now have access to new tools to help us document and preserve our heritage. This new media can document, record and make available information and stories in a way that has never before been possible, and has the potential to provide information about our heritage to a much broader audience.

Arts

Community health, personal identity and growth are nurtured by the visual, performing and literary arts. Artists support the culture and heritage of the communities in which they live. They also challenge our perspectives, and stimulate new ways of thinking.

This connection between the arts and social well-being was recognized by ECE and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment in the 2004 *NWT Arts Strategy*, which advocates a holistic role for the GNWT in supporting education, creation, and appreciation

of the arts. The Strategy is not yet fully implemented, but is expected to guide future GNWT investments and activities in this sector.

Language

Throughout history, languages have been in flux. Language strength increases and decreases with changes in economic, social and political conditions. However, the current pace of change in language use around the world is unprecedented as more and more traditional languages disappear. There are approximately 6,000 languages in the world and it is estimated that:

- Over 50% of these are endangered.
- 96% of these languages are spoken by only 4% of the world's population.
- On average, one language disappears every two weeks.

Most of the eleven official languages spoken in the Northwest Territories only exist in Canada, and a number are spoken only in the North. If they are lost from our region, they are lost entirely. The decline of these minority languages is a serious loss from a cultural, historic and economic standpoint. Although there are economic reasons for preserving language diversity, the emphasis must be on the relationship between language, culture and one's sense of self-worth. Languages embody the intellectual wealth of the people who speak them.

Aboriginal Language Use

The NWT is home to Canada's second largest concentration of Aboriginal citizens, comprising nearly half of its population. The official Aboriginal languages of the NWT are: Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, Gwich'in, Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey and South Slavey.

Statistics for most Aboriginal languages show a persistent decline in the number of young speakers. While nearly 40% of the NWT's Aboriginal population report the ability to speak an Aboriginal language, nearly 35% of them are over the age of 45 (Canada Census of 1996). Between 1984 and 1999, the percentage of Aboriginal people who could speak their language declined by 9% among Inuvialuit speakers, 15% among those speaking Gwich'in,

16% for Slavey, 19% for Chipewyan and 13% for Cree. In contrast the number of Tlicho speakers declined by some 4%.

Among factors contributing to the declining health of the NWT's Aboriginal languages are:

"With more online resources available (such as the Lessons from the Land Idaa Trail), the web becomes a more useful teaching tool" – Survey Respondent

- English and French are the principal languages of use in most parts of Canada.
- The intergenerational transmission of Aboriginal languages was interrupted by the attendance of students in residential schools.
- The segment of the population that is most fluent in Aboriginal languages is aging.
- Media, such as radio, television, print and Internet, are primarily available in English or French.
- The small numbers of people in each language group.

The evidence suggests that important decisions must be made in the immediate future if the diversity of Aboriginal language usage in the NWT is to be protected.

French Language Use

The NWT French language community is concentrated largely in Yellowknife, with smaller communities in Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik. In 2001, the total number of people that reported French as their mother tongue was about 950 or 2% of the NWT population while a total of 3,170 people, or some 8% of the NWT population, reported being able to speak French. The age distribution of people able to speak French has remained relatively unchanged between 1996 and 2001. Almost 90% of the NWT Francophone population was born outside the NWT.

The strength and sustainability of the community are bolstered by the language protection provisions in Section 23 of the Canadian Constitution, and a strong French-speaking population elsewhere in Canada and the world.

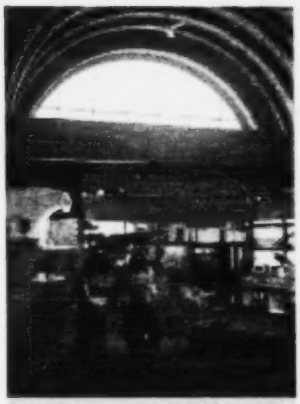
Measuring Success

We will measure our success by the number of people who use their language, and who celebrate their heritage and culture in their homes, in the classroom, on the job and in their communities.

Objectives, Priorities and Actions

Objective 1:

Preservation and Knowledge of our Heritage



Leadership in the preservation our heritage is a task that involves a broad range of individuals and groups. The Departmental focus must provide a broad basis to which family and communities can turn for support.

Priority: Preservation of our heritage

Actions:

- Partner with communities to document traditional knowledge and archaeological and historical sites.
- Working with communities, identify gaps in current documentation and develop plans to address information gaps.
- Develop a strategy to systematically collect museum and archival materials for public collections.
- Develop new exhibits that convey messages about the culture and heritage of the people of the NWT.
- Develop a new policy to support community heritage organizations in their efforts to preserve and make heritage information accessible.

Priority: Provide access to heritage information

Actions:

- Prepare new exhibits to travel to NWT communities.
- Improve access to heritage information, including cultural and heritage information in the archival and museum collections, through the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre website.
- Ensure that outreach programs are meeting the needs of schools and culture and heritage organizations in the NWT.
- Fully integrate culture and heritage programs in the school and postsecondary systems.

Objective 2:

Promotion of the Arts

Priority: Provide opportunities for people to learn about and engage in the arts.

Actions:
- Develop fine arts curriculum for school use.
- Develop promotional materials on opportunities in the arts.
- Provide contributions to support community festivals.

Priority: Support creation of arts

Actions:
- Implement the *NWT Arts Strategy.*
- Provide funding to artists at various stages of their career through the NWT Arts Council.
- Provide opportunities for artists to display their work to the public.
- Partner with Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) to conduct regular reviews of the results of the *NWT Arts Strategy Implementation Plan.*

Objective 3:

Support and Promote our Official Languages

Priority: Provide program support

Actions:
- Negotiate contribution agreements and support Aboriginal language communities and Aboriginal broadcasting societies.
- Provide funding to create learning environments that support the efforts of language communities to revitalize their languages.

Objective 3 cont ...

- Provide funding and supports to promote the value of the NWT's Official Languages and their continued use in day-to-day activities.
- Support Aboriginal language communities in developing and implementing their strategic language plans.

Priority: Develop resource materials

Actions:
- Provide language resource materials to promote the use of NWT official languages as living and working languages in the following areas:
  - Geographic Place Names
  - Terminology Development
  - Aboriginal Languages Website
  - Language Planning
  - Language Promotion
  - Results-based Management and Accountability Framework Implementation/ Evaluation

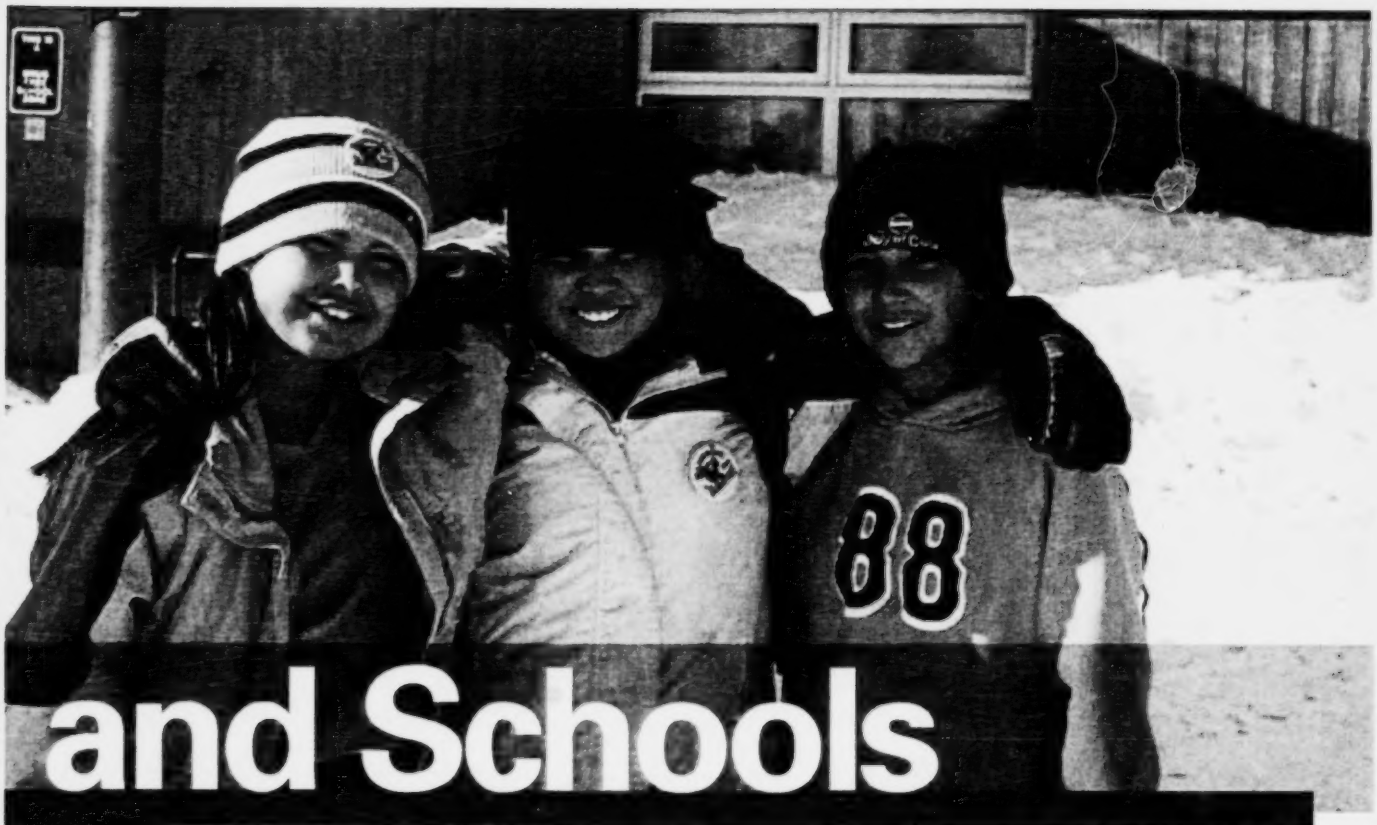
Priority: Ensure compliance with the *Official Languages Act*

Actions:
- Create an Official Languages Division within ECE to support and promote the language use within the GNWT and in communities of the NWT.
- Consolidate administrative and policy support for the implementation of the *Official Languages Act* within that division.
- Conduct routine compliance reviews within the GNWT regarding availability of language services as required under the *Official Languages Act* and the *Official Languages Policy*.
- Report on an annual basis on GNWT activities associated with official languages.

Early Childhood Education of Children and Youth

There is a perception that the current education system is not producing the types of results that the public would like, particularly in comparison to southern jurisdictions with long established education systems. The reality is that today the education system has made significant progress over the past 10 to 15 years as more and more students have access to education, particularly among Aboriginal students who make up about 64% of our student population.

The challenge is to build on this success to ensure that the NWT education system continues to promote learning, and enhance skills, attitudes and behaviours in ways that help students establish a solid foundation for their future.



and Schools

Objectives

1. *A Strong Foundation for Learning*
2. *Students Achieving Their Potential*
3. *A Results-based Education System*

Vision

Northern families developing a strong foundation for their children's learning.

21st Century Environment

"48% of students enrolled in kindergarten to Grade 12 programs participate in Aboriginal Language programs"

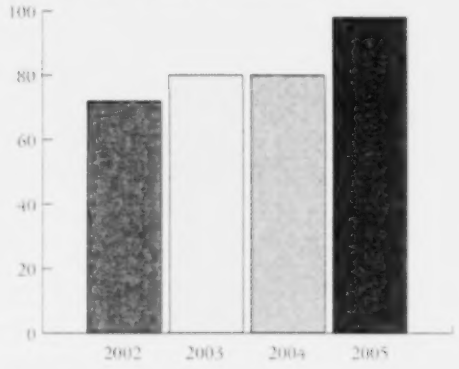
Early Childhood

We expect the demand for high quality childcare will grow as more NWT parents enter the workforce. In early 2005, there were 99 licensed early childhood programs in the NWT, providing 1,403 infant, preschool and after school care placements.

The goal of our early learning and childcare programs is to support parents and caregivers in their efforts to nurture their child's development between birth and the time the child enters school. A better start in learning leads to greater success in life. It leads to the formation of socialization skills, improved health, and better economic prospects. Good childcare is an investment that is returned many times over.

ECE has already made substantial investments in early childhood initiatives, through developmentally appropriate programming which emphasizes social interaction, language development, learning through play, and large and small motor development. Although families are the foundation for the high quality care and development of young children, community programs also play an important role by providing education, resources, and support. The challenge in the future will be to continue to build the early learning network and to improve program quality to meet the needs of the growing number of children who will need care.

Licensed Early Childhood Programs



Schools

More NWT students than ever before are completing high school and graduating with diplomas. Graduation by Aboriginal students and by students in smaller communities has increased substantially. Although there is some variation from year to year, the overall rate has increased by 9% over the past five years.

At the same time, the NWT graduation rate of around 45% still falls well short of the national graduation rate of about 70%. Some students are not completing the basic requirements they need to be successful in high school, and as a result are not completing secondary education. We still have much work to do in this area.

"It should be a priority of this government to fully assess every child either at age 3 or 4 and prior to entering kindergarten"

- Survey Respondent

Instruction

With the exception of unique elements such as the inclusion of Northern Aboriginal cultures as a fundamental aspect of learning, the course selection offered to students in NWT schools is similar to that found in schools in other parts of Canada. Students who complete their schooling in the NWT should be able to access college, university and certified trades and occupational programs anywhere in the world.

The NWT has, in cooperation with Western provinces and the Northern territories, collaborated in the development of a wide range of curricula for elementary and secondary school. In addition, we have developed curricula and courses, such as Dene Kede, Inuuqatigiit and Northern Studies, that address the unique needs of the NWT. Regular review, selection of appropriate resource materials, and curricula updates are required to ensure that the school program is kept up to date.

At present, there are pathways of study at the senior secondary level. One prepares students for university or college entry and the other prepares students for apprenticeship and trades training. Students may enter apprenticeship programs while they are still in high school, accumulating time credits towards an apprenticeship while simultaneously completing the requirements for high school graduation.

ECE has been working to develop and offer additional courses at the high school level to prepare students for certified occupations, the workforce or to make other productive choices. To effectively implement these new pathways for students, we will need to develop courses, resources, teacher supports, and appropriate career counseling.

While established curricula provide the basis for school instruction, learning is also dependent to a great extent on the skill and abilities of the teachers and other instructional support staff. Ensuring that teachers have the necessary skills and continue to build their skills throughout their careers is an essential element of effective instruction.

"We need to give high school students more choices – maybe if we offered shop classes in our communities they would stay in school longer and get a trade"

- Survey Respondent

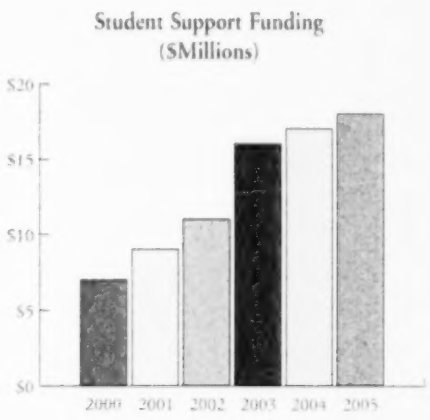
Language and Culture

Approximately 64% of students in the NWT school system are Aboriginal. Past experience and research has demonstrated that students learn most effectively if their learning is firmly grounded in their culture and language. It is essential that appropriate language and culture-related activities form the foundation for learning in the NWT school system.

It has been challenging to adapt Aboriginal learning systems to schools and develop appropriate programs in language acquisition and maintenance. Schools, Aboriginal governments and language community organizations must work together to strengthen language and cultural programs. Some progress has been made, but there is much more work to be done if the students of the NWT are to effectively benefit from our rich language and cultural mosaic.

Student Support

Since 2000, the GNWT has increased student support funding by more than $10 million—an increase of 8% to 15% of total school contributions. This funding is used to provide supports, such as specialized programs and staff. However, even with these advances, limited access to specialized diagnosis and intervention services and resources makes meeting the needs of students a significant challenge for parents, teachers, schools, boards, and ECE.



During the period covered by this Strategic Plan, it will be important to expand support services for students with both short and long term needs. Delivery of these services will require close collaboration between teachers, health and social services professionals, parents and children. If all students are to achieve their potential, this collaboration must be based on the specific needs of the children.

Family and Community

A healthy education system relies on the active participation of parents and the community. It leads to improved attendance, positive attitudes, higher grades, and increased participation in postsecondary education. Strengthening and supporting parental involvement is critical to the long-term success of students.

However, not all families are able to support students in the same way. The effect of family problems can create barriers to education success, and students affected by these difficulties need other support to continue their studies.

"Local needs and national standards are equally important, and not mutually exclusive. In order to meet national standards, children need to develop a strong sense of who they are and where they come from"

- Survey Respondent

Accountability

ECE and elected regional and local education authorities have made great strides over the past decade in strengthening accountability within the school system. These changes include additional reporting, a greater focus on meeting the needs of students and increased public involvement in educational decisions. For example, the Department has improved the public reporting of results from the education system through the biannual publication of the *Towards Excellence* report which shows us how the school system is changing over time. We have improved our data collection so that we have a more comprehensive view of student success, and this has provided a more solid basis for planning. In addition, standardized student testing will be introduced to ensure a meaningful way to measure and monitor how students are doing in our education system.

However, more work needs to be done and education authorities and the Department have identified the need to further improve accountability, particularly to parents.

Measuring Success

We will measure our success by the number of children who enter school ready to learn, by the quality of educational experiences available to youth while they are in school, and by the number who leave school prepared for further education or employment.

Objectives, Priorities and Actions

Objective 1:

A Strong Foundation for Learning

Priority: Increase access to and support for programs

Actions:

- Assist communities to develop or expand early learning and childcare programs for children from infancy to preschool, according to their needs.
- Increase subsidy supports available to parents and licensed providers.
- Improve monitoring of the quality of early learning programs.
- Expand the number of affordable licensed programs and spaces.
- Provide guidelines for the development and implementation of a variety of early childhood development programs using successful programs in the NWT and other jurisdictions as models.
- Work in cooperation with other GNWT, federal and Aboriginal governments to improve program coordination.
- Support family literacy programs offered through and in association with early learning centres.
- Develop an evaluation framework to support early language immersion programs.
- Support the integration and inclusion of children who require additional assistance in early childhood programs.

Priority: Increase the skills of early childhood educators

Actions:

- Offer staff development and training to early learning and child-care educators through the Aurora College certificate program.
- Increase certification requirements for early learning and child

care workers.
- Provide professional development for frontline staff during site visits by Departmental programming experts.

Priority: Regulate and monitor program quality and effectiveness

Actions:
- Establish mechanisms to support self-evaluation of programs by operators.
- Provide opportunities for operators to share knowledge and experiences with a goal to improving program quality.
- Conduct routine program monitoring in all regions and communities.
- Conduct quality-based monitoring and licensing in addition to monitoring health and safety requirements.

Objective 2:

Students Achieving their Potential

Priority: Involve family and community

Actions:
- Regularly seek input and comments from parents regarding programs and services offered by ECE.
- Support parental understanding of the education system and build linkages between schools, teachers and parents.
- Increase information available to parents on early learning and school programs.
- Encourage community involvement in program development.
- Report to the public regularly on ECE supported programs.

Priority: Focus on language and culture

Actions:
- Develop Aboriginal language curriculum and resources.
- Review Aboriginal second language delivery.
- Increase in-service and professional development for teachers in the area of Aboriginal Languages and culture.
- Develop resources and supports for language and the *Culture Based Education (CBE) Directive.*
- Review the structures and functions of the Teaching and Learning Centres (TLCs) to increase linkages between language communities, TLCs and schools.

Priority: Increase the availability of student support

Actions:
- Develop a service delivery model in collaboration with other GNWT departments and support partners to ensure that children's needs are identified and addressed at an early age and throughout their educational careers.
- Conduct the third Student Needs Assessment.
- Identify priority recommendations in the Student Needs Assessment and develop an implementation plan to address needs.
- Identify requirements for additional counselling and other required support services.
- Identify current use of student support services and increase accountability requirements of education authorities with respect to spending under the *Inclusive Schooling Directive.*
- Report, at least biannually, on spending related to student services.

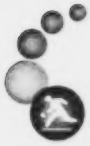
Objective 2 con't ...

Priority: Expand course offerings in schools

Actions:
- Remove legislative barriers that prohibit full-day kindergarten.
- Develop a program for full-day kindergarten.
- Continue regular renewal of existing curriculum at all levels.
- Maintain linkage of high school curriculum with that used in the Province of Alberta.
- Provide a broader range of choices at the senior secondary level - particularly those related to preparation for occupations.
- Support the development of Aboriginal language and culture materials linked to the Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit curricula.
- Complete a review of small high schools with the goal of defining best approaches to programming and funding.
- Complete an analysis of senior secondary enrollments.
- Examine alternative models of senior secondary delivery.
- Research, promote and test innovative approaches to support student achievement and success.

Priority: Provide pre-employment and in-service professional development for educators and other school staff

Actions:
- Identify key areas in which additional training is required to support the availability of staff.
- Work with education authorities and professional and employee representative organizations to design and implement pre-service training programs.
- Target improvement of the instructional skills for teachers and other staff that support student learning.
- Increase teacher skills in the assessment of student literacy.



Objective 2 con't ...

- Evaluate current in-service and professional development models and research alternatives.
- Implement the Teacher Growth and Development Model to assess teacher performance and plan further development of teacher skills.
- Maintain a teacher induction program for new teachers.
- Review the structure of the Educational Leadership Program delivery model to ensure school principals are well prepared for their tasks.
- Open a dialogue with the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) about a coordinated plan to increase student achievement.
- Double the number of Aboriginal teachers, senior managers, and principals in the school system.

Objective 3:

A Results-based Education System

Priority: Strengthening educational leadership

Actions:
- Create a human development strategy that brings together the following initiatives to strengthen educational leadership in the NWT school system:
  - *Teacher mentorship*
  - *Educational Leadership Program*
  - *Aboriginal Language Acquisition Professional Development Fund*
  - *Aboriginal Educators Leadership Institute*

Objective 3 con't ...

- *Education Authority Development*
- *NWT Teachers' Association*
- *Professional Development (PD) coordination.*
- *Student success initiative PD funds.*
- *Development of consistent definition / criteria for professional development.*

Priority: Assess system performance

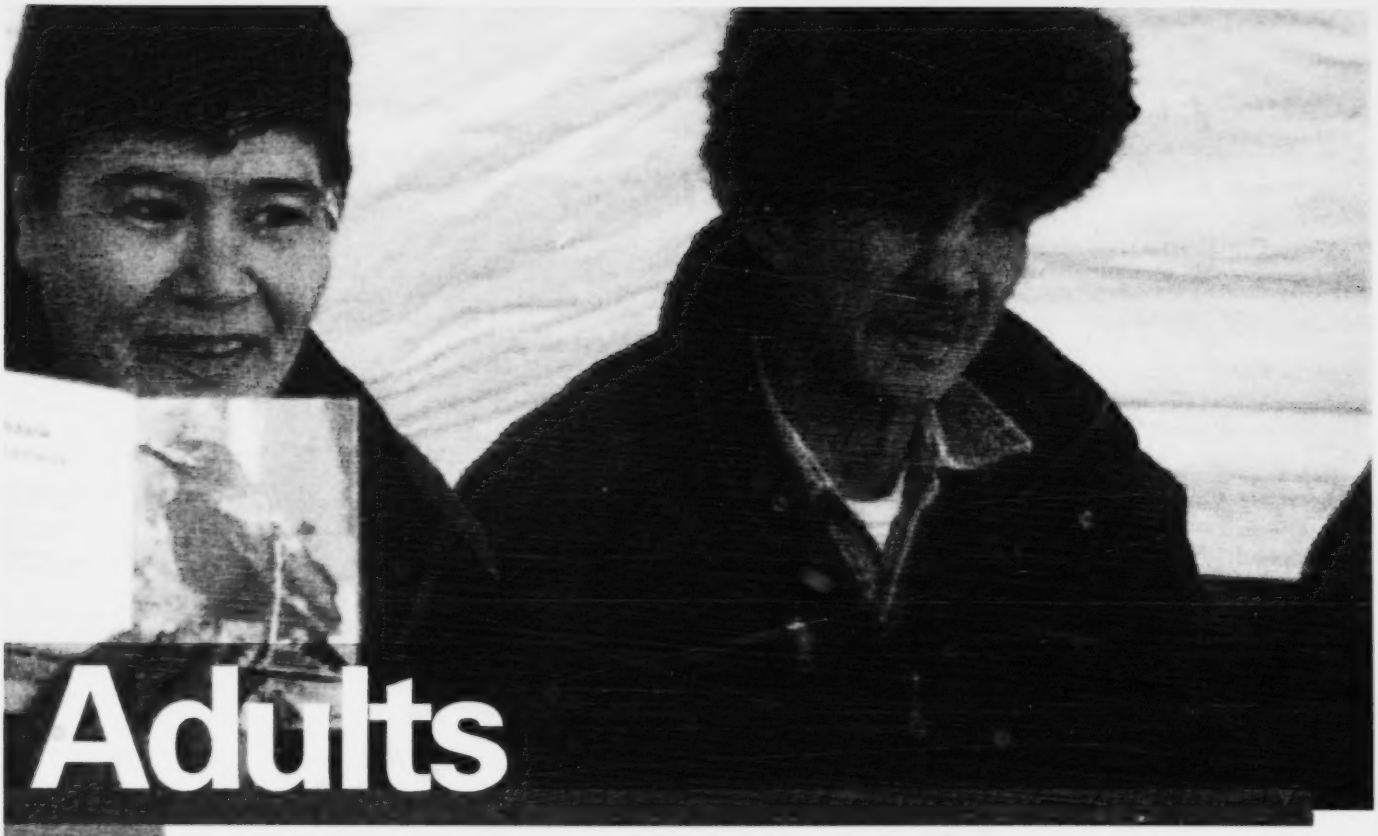
Actions:
- Gather student performance information from functional grade level assessment, Alberta Achievement Test scores, and senior secondary analysis.
- Report to the public on a regular basis about how students are doing in our school system.
- Set requirements for school and education authority planning.
- Review and confirm the roles and responsibilities of schools, education authorities and ECE with respect to planning and reporting.
- Assess student progress through the *Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting Directive.*
- Conduct regular reviews of key Departmental policy and operational matters.
- Renew the education authority review process.

Education of Adult and Postsecondary Education

Adult and postsecondary education includes a wide range of programs and services intended to ensure that the NWT adult population has the skill, knowledge and ability to be self-reliant and able to take full advantage of social and economic opportunities.

Programs and services in support of this goal are offered by a number of GNWT departments, boards and agencies. Aboriginal governments, industry, other levels of government and other organizations are also directly involved.

Postsecondary education, research and innovation are increasingly important to the NWT's future economic growth and prosperity. It is important that the postsecondary education and industry training systems continue to strengthen ties with local, community and regional groups to ensure that training and education address the needs of the people in the communities.



Adults

Objectives

1. Access and Choice for Adult Learners

2. A Responsive College

2. An Integrated Adult Learning Network

Northern adults continuing to learn and grow to meet the requirements of daily living.

21st Century Environment

Education Levels

Education levels continue to be the greatest determinant of employment. Over 70% of all new jobs require postsecondary education.

While increasing success in high school programs is a positive sign, there remains a significant number of adults, particularly in our smaller communities and amongst Aboriginal Northerners, who do not have the education levels to successfully compete for and hold emerging jobs. In our smaller communities, only 36.8% of the population has a high school education, compared to 67.5% NWT-wide. Information from 2001 shows that 44% of Aboriginal persons had at least a high school diploma, compared to 82% of non-Aboriginal residents.

Improving the education levels of adults in the NWT, particularly those who do not have the required education levels to access postsecondary education, training or employment opportunities, remains a key challenge. As we meet this challenge, the demand for postsecondary education and training is expected to increase.

Literacy

Residents in the NWT are influenced by the information age that requires us to absorb, understand and process information in more forms than ever before. Not only has literacy become increasingly important for managing our daily lives, it has become a fundamental requirement for entry into the labour force, regardless of occupation. Literacy rates in the NWT are among the lowest in Canada. Based, in part, on the following statistics, there is a demonstrated need to deliver adult literacy and basic education programs through a wide range of delivery agencies:

- 66% of Aboriginal adults and 31% of non-Aboriginal adults do not have the literacy skills needed for daily living.
- The annual income of people without literacy skills is 46% less than the income of high school graduates.
- People with low literacy skills are more likely to use income support for basic needs.

- Fewer than 30% of those with a Grade 9 education or less are employed. This rate rises to over 75% for those with a High School Diploma and over 90% for those with a university degree.

To effectively participate in the dynamic change that is being experienced in the NWT, Northerners with limited literacy must strengthen their skills and abilities.

Skills

Skill Shortages

Canada-wide skill shortages are particularly evident in the NWT where there is a need for skilled and professional workers in a wide variety of occupations. This has become more pronounced in recent years with the developments in the non-renewable resource sector. It is imperative for the NWT to develop these workers in order to meet labour market demands. Provision of appropriate postsecondary and industry-based training is key to the development of available workers.

Skill Trends

Further complicating the skill shortage is the growing demand for continuing education of skilled workers. The rate of change in many professions, including those in trades and technologies, continues to increase. For workers to keep pace, many must regularly study new subjects and learn about new methodologies and techniques. In other words, they must be committed to lifelong learning.

Current and future job growth will be of little benefit to residents unless they have the necessary supports and develop a commitment to strengthen the skills and abilities required for jobs in the NWT.

Training

Delivery in the Northern environment

There are a number of challenges that will continue to face the GNWT in delivering responsive, cost-effective postsecondary education and training. Small populations, low education levels, competing opportunities such as low skill employment, large distances, cultural differences and cost all exacerbate the adult development challenge. Historically, Northerners prefer to have education and training opportunities made available as close to home as possible, particularly those adults who have children and require supports from family and their communities. ECE now has considerable experience in developing program models and identifying the required costs for postsecondary education and training. The Department is also in a position to determine whether there is cost benefit in offering specific programs and services.

Increasing demands to invest in training

While it is true that ECE, and the GNWT as a whole, must be strategic in its investments, there is constant pressure to increase commitment to adult education and training. This is particularly true in relation to the resource sectors where the demand for skilled workers in the oil and gas fields and diamond mines has had a significant impact on priorities and expenditures. Partnerships with industry, Aboriginal governments, and other agencies have increased to meet the demand, but they often have cost-sharing implications involving long-term commitments for government.

Student Supports

Youth and adults participating in adult and postsecondary education and training require supports to meet a variety of needs, many of which may be unique to their individual circumstances. These include personal and academic counselling, financial support, and housing assistance. The GNWT shares responsibility in the provision of these supports with families, communities, Aboriginal governments, businesses and industry.

As the cost of education and training continues to increase, supporting students through its programs and services such as the Student Financial Assistance program, training on the job subsidy programs and Aurora College student services will become more challenging.

Measuring Success

We will measure our success by increasing the number of Northerners who complete higher levels of education, the number of adults accessing education and training opportunities, by the way we respond to emerging education and training needs in communities, and by our ability to work cooperatively with other adult learning delivery partners.

Objectives, Priorities and Actions

Objective 1:

Access and Choice for Adult Learners

Priority: Establish high school certification of adult learners

Actions:

- Identify students who did not complete high school and offer them opportunities to complete basic education courses.
- Define requirements for adult high school certification.
- Further develop the existing partnership with Alberta Distance Learning to increase course offerings for adults.
- Develop adult learning needs model to ensure adult access to accreditation.

Priority: Increase student services

Actions:

- Provide additional funding for student accommodation and supports, and create additional residence spaces at Aurora College campuses in Yellowknife and Inuvik.
- Provide ongoing funding support for student success centres at each of the three Aurora College campuses.
- Expand linkage between career development centres and College campuses so that College graduates have ready access to information regarding careers and jobs and can begin planning their careers prior to leaving school.
- Adjust Student Financial Assistance funding to reflect inflation and the cost of postsecondary education.
- Establish mechanism to provide financial assistance for students enrolled in upper level adult basic education courses offered by Aurora College.

"We need to figure out what we want Aurora College to do and then fully fund them do do it"

– Focus Group Participant

Objective 1 con't ...

Priority: Regulate private sector provision of programs

Actions:
- Implement *Private Vocational Training Directive* to regulate the quality and stability of private training.
- Monitor private sector compliance with the directive.
- Measure the success of students enrolling in private sector training programs.
- Identify additional opportunities for collaboration between private sector trainers and Aurora College.
- Identify opportunities for effective private sector training and support the development of appropriate programming.

Objective 2:

A Responsive College

Priority: Define College mandate and priorities

Actions:
- Establish planning framework to guide Aurora College strategic planning that is linked to the ECE Strategic Plan.
- In cooperation with Aurora College, develop a business-planning model to guide program and service planning for College activities.
- Update the *Public Colleges Act* to reflect the evolution of the NWT College system.

Priority: Provide high quality programs

Actions:
- Develop a results-based accountability framework for the College.
- In cooperation with Aurora College, establish a schedule for the regular external evaluation of programming.

Objective 2 con't ...

- Support College actions to maintain and expand current credit and program transfers with other postsecondary institutions.
- Seek student and employer feedback on College programs and graduate skill levels.
- Integrate workplace essential skills into adult programming

Priority: Provide pre-employment and in-service staff development for College personnel

"Has anyone done a study to truly see whether the program is succeeding? ...ECE and the College seem to measure activities, but long-term outcomes are harder to track and measure."

– Survey Respondent

Actions:

- Ensure that cultural awareness orientation training is provided for College staff.
- Provide mentorship supports for community adult educators.
- Share professional development activities between College and Education Authority staff.
- Support the College to fully implement a growth and development assessment model for instructional staff.
- Support the College's establishment of a comprehensive human resource development plan which focuses on technical and instructional excellence.
- Maintain adult learning certificate program to encourage those training adult learners to build their skills and knowledge.

Objective 3:

An Integrated Adult Learning Network

Priority: Encourage partnerships in program delivery

Actions:

- Work with Aboriginal governments and other training parties to establish regional and community training coordinating committees.
- Establish a regular consultation process for engaging communities, Aboriginal governments, employers and industry in identifying

education and training priorities as well as supports for students and trainees.

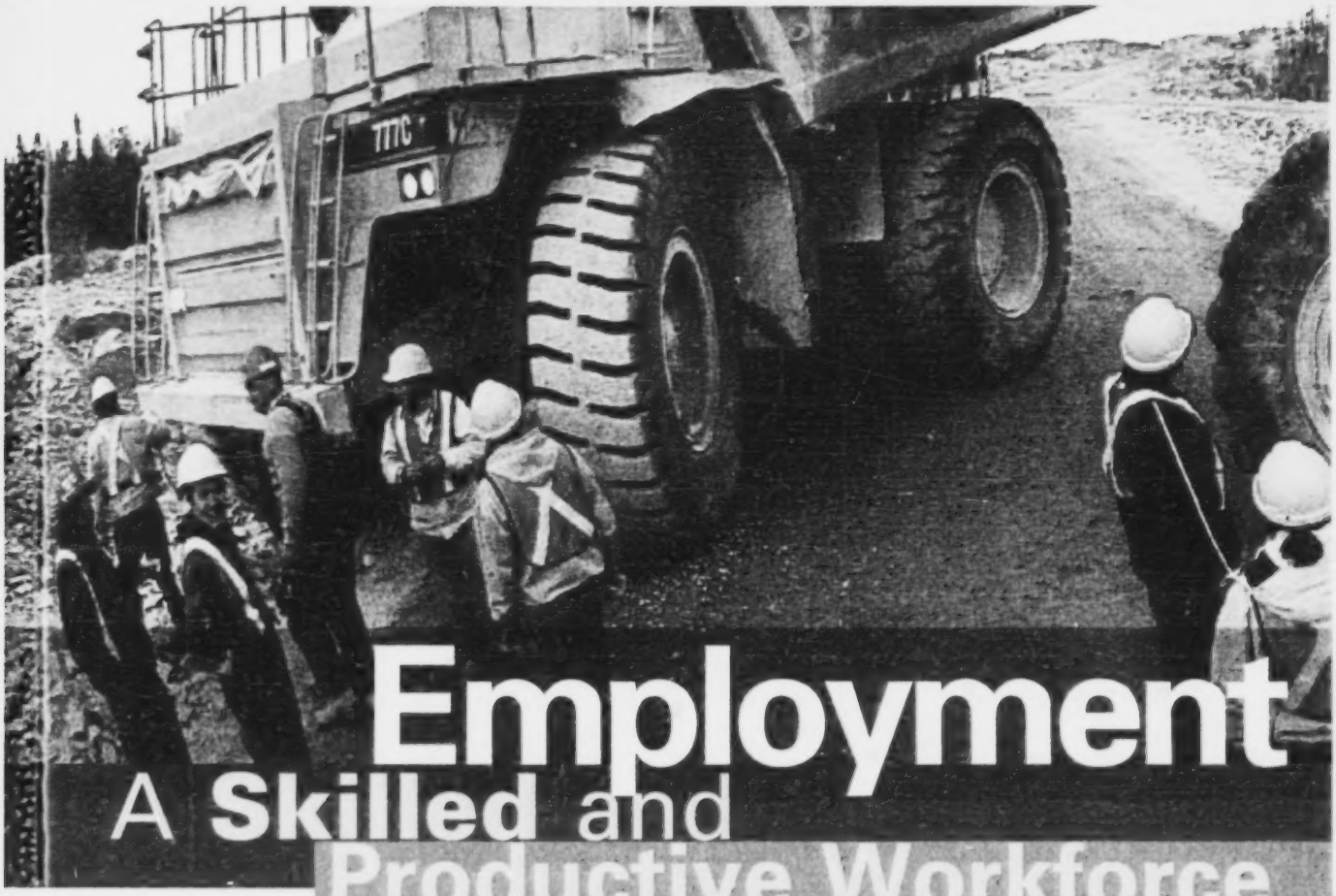
- Share results of education and training outcomes with partners.
- Examine the potential for increased linkages between College Community Learning Centres and the school system.
- Establish pilot projects to test resource sharing and systems integration between senior secondary education, adult literacy and basic education, and trades and technology.
- Strengthen collaboration between Aurora College and school governance bodies.

Priority: Accreditation of learning across the system

Actions:
- Establish formal mechanisms for assessing prior learning.
- Increase understanding of prior learning by staff members working within the NWT learning system.
- Examine opportunity for a broad system of certification of training activities offered by public and private sector training institutions.
- Determine requirements for record keeping to document learner achievements.
- Make functional grade level assessment results available to the College.

Priority: Regularly evaluate program effectiveness

Actions:
- Develop schedule, process, and criteria for program and service reviews.
- Involve College, departmental and private sector representatives in evaluative activities.
- Implement Private Training Directive to ensure the quality of private sector training delivery.
- Report publicly on evaluation activities.



Employment

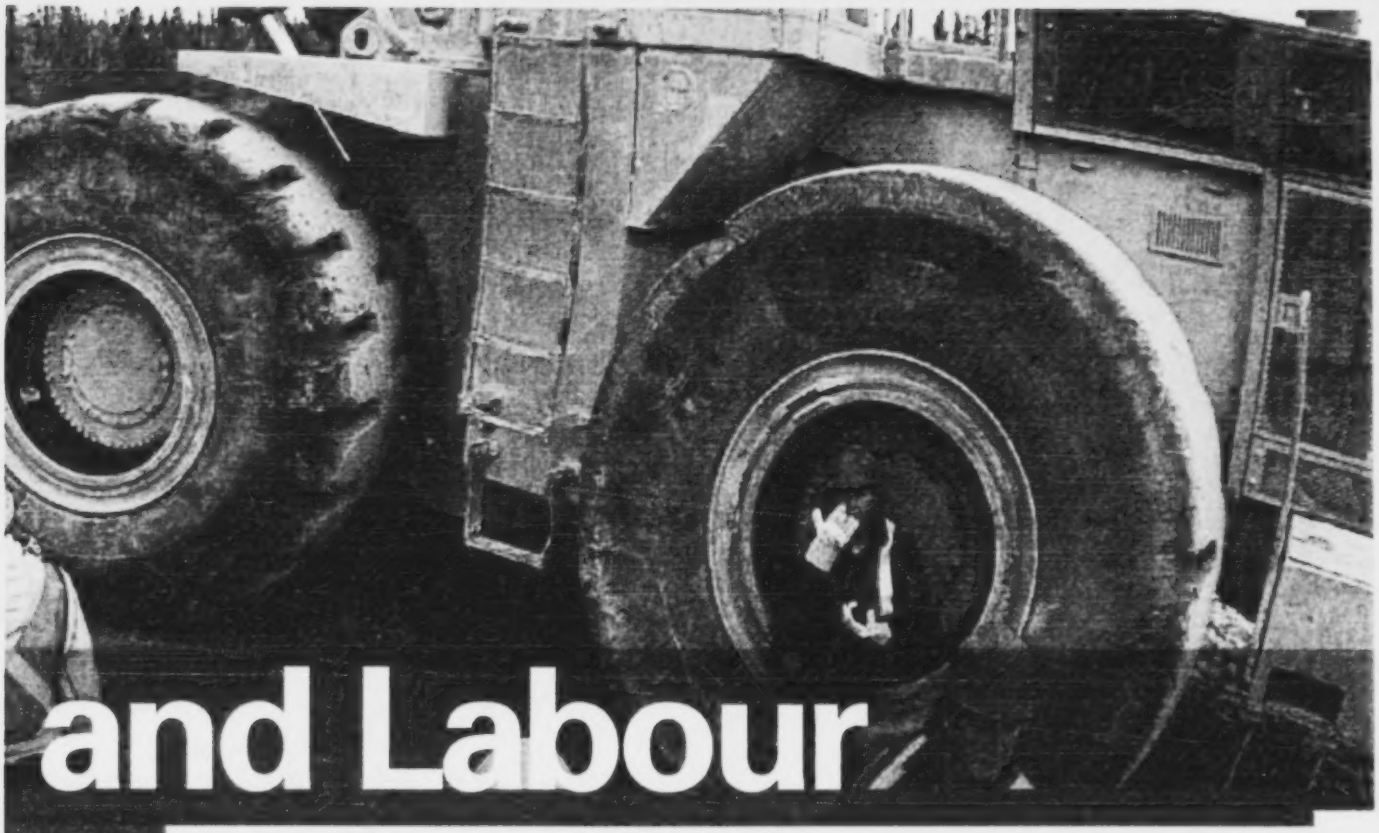
A Skilled and Productive Workforce

ECE provides a variety of career, employment and labour programs and services to ensure that NWT residents have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to participate fully as productive citizens in the Northern economy.

These include a coordinated system of career development services. We produce and distribute relevant Northern labour market and occupational information so that Northerners are aware of work and learning opportunities. We promote the value of career planning and the creation of a career planning culture to support self-reliant people and communities.

The Department also funds, supports and evaluates training programs, including apprenticeship training, that are responsive to the needs of individuals, industry and communities. We work with employers and industry groups to ensure a coordinated approach to labour force development. We establish occupational standards and provide certification for designated occupations in the NWT.

ECE promotes fair, healthy, safe, cooperative, and productive work environments. We provide relevant labour standards regulations to employers and employees in the NWT. We also regulate and enforce the *Labour Standards Act* in the NWT.



and Labour

Objectives

1. *Northerners Making Informed Career Choices*
2. *A Skilled Workforce*
3. *A Productive Work Environment*

ECE works closely with these partners to encourage and support the development of a Northern workforce:

- Aurora College
- GNWT departments
- Federal government departments
- Aboriginal organizations
- Private sector employers

Vision

Northerners participating in a strong and prosperous work environment.

21st Century Challenges

The NWT Labour Force

Labour Force Activity

The NWT has one of the fastest growing economies in Canada, with unprecedented business and employment opportunities. In 2004, the average employment rate was close to 70%, and NWT has the highest employment rate in Canada. Although a disparity exists between the employment rates in Yellowknife and smaller communities, (the Yellowknife rate is 81.9%; average rate in smaller communities, about 60%) the employment rates for Aboriginal people are improving. In 2002, the employment rate for Aboriginal people was 52.3%, the highest value recorded since information began to be collected in 1984.

Over a 10-year period ending in 2010, the labour market in the NWT is projected to grow by as much as 7,000 jobs. During that same period, a 20% decrease in labour supply is anticipated because many workers do not have the required skills. Unless changes occur, the pool of available workers within the NWT will not have the capacity to meet future demands – a situation that is complicated by increasing national and global competition for jobs.

The Aging Workforce

While the NWT population is younger than in the rest of Canada, our population is aging and birth rates are declining. This trend, coupled with increases in early retirement, can be expected to put pressure on young and middle-aged adults to develop the skills required for the jobs being vacated. Unless the NWT is able to provide the trained and skilled workers that are needed, this may lead to increased in-migration of workers.

Public Sector

Even with the current boom in mining, oil & gas and construction, the public service remains the largest single employer in the NWT. About 37.3% of NWT workers are employed by in government administration, health or education services.

This sector will continued to be challenged by fiscal restraint, the need to ensure the labour pool has appropriate skill levels at both the NWT and community level, and the changes that will come about as a result of devolution and the establishment of Aboriginal governments.

Regional, Community and Aboriginal Government Development

One of the goals of the current Legislature is "well-governed, sustainable communities and regions able to fulfill their potential." The responsibilities of regional, community and Aboriginal governments are growing as a result of self-governance agreements and devolution of authorities. Many of these governments require capacity development – preparation of skilled and experienced employees – in order to effectively manage and deliver current and future programs and services.

"Maybe career counselling services should be available in the schools"

– Survey Respondent

As Aboriginal self-government is implemented in the NWT, it will be important for the GNWT and the Aboriginal governments to clearly communicate where and how members of the public can access programs and services.

Private Sector

Growth of the private sector is expected to continue over the planning period, particularly in the non-renewable resource industries, creating a high demand for workers. Businesses supporting the expanding population as well as those providing services and support to sectors such as transportation all require skilled employees. At present, large and small employers alike are looking for skilled staff.

Non-Renewable Resources

In 2001, the NWT's GDP grew by 19.6% (the highest growth rate in Canada), largely as a result of development in the non-renewable resource sector, and this trend is expected to continue. This has had a significant effect on the employment levels and skill requirements for workers. Key developments in this area are:

Diamonds

Over the last 10 years two diamond mines, BHP Billiton Diamond Inc.'s Ekati Mine and the Diavik Diamond Mine have gone into operation, while a third mine, De Beer's Snap Lake Mine, is expected to begin operation in 2006. The operating mines employ just over 1,300 people in unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled jobs. The opening of the mines has also led to the creation of a secondary diamond industry which includes cutting and polishing facilities.

Oil and Gas

The last five years have seen a significant increase in oil and gas exploration in the NWT, driven by increased demand in the United States, declining reserves in Alberta and the possibility of the construction of a natural gas pipeline along the Mackenzie Valley. Employment in this industry varies on an annual basis, but it is estimated that 1,728 people are employed in the industry for some period of time each year.

This sector is expected to grow dramatically with the potential construction of the pipeline. The pipeline is currently in regulatory review and construction could begin as early as 2007. More than 8,000 jobs for skilled trades, labourers, engineers and other professionals could be created by pipeline construction and associated activity. Job growth in the resource sector, and the associated influx of new residents to the NWT, will create jobs in other sectors of the economy as the demand for goods and services increases.

Labour Services

The NWT's ability to compete and to provide secure, rewarding jobs depends on highly productive workplaces. The key to creating such workplaces is to find the right balance between the interests of employees and employers. The GNWT will need to focus its attention not only on helping people develop the necessary skills to find work, but also on promoting cooperative work environments that foster constructive labour-management relations.

The workplace in the NWT is governed by a complex array of both territorial and federal legislative and regulatory requirements. With the anticipated increase in the number of employers and works, there will be a higher demand for labour services to ensure employers and employees are aware of their rights and duties.

Measuring Success

We will measure our success by the number of Northerners who make informed career choices, by the number of people who develop the skills and abilities they need to become certified workers in the NWT, and by an assessment of whether the labour environment is fair, stable, and provides opportunities for all Northerners.

Objectives, Priorities and Actions

Objective 1:

Northerners Making Informed Career Choices

Priority: Improve access to career development services

Actions:
- Dedicate career counselling resources specifically to support students and staff attending NWT schools and Aurora College.
- Build increased understanding of existing services through improved linkages with employers, schools, Aboriginal governments and communities.
- Update the *Career Development Directive* to ensure the roles, responsibilities and mandates for career development partners are clear and reflective of new and changing relationships.
- Provide access to career development services using new and emerging technologies.

Priority: Provide effective career counselling services

Actions:
- Increase skill levels of career counselling staff.
- Develop and implement process for obtaining results information about career development services.
- Partner with the schools and college on professional development activities.
- Provide routine updates of labour market information to educational institutions and the public.
- In cooperation with the NWT Bureau of Statistics provide labour market information along with career counselling information at school.
- Create career awareness with parents of students.

Objective 1 con't ...

Priority: Link skilled employees to work

Actions:
- Develop an employer survey to identify essential skills required by employees.
- Raise awareness of job opportunities and the required skills for those jobs.
- Work with employers to remove barriers to employment.
- Encourage preference for employment of Northern workers by industry and new employers.
- Involve industry and employers in training to the greatest extent possible.

Objective 2:

A Skilled Workforce

Priority: Provide institutional and workplace skills development

Actions:
- Develop and deliver programs through Aurora College that meet current and emerging labour market needs.
- Encourage employers to support the development of their employees by sharing best practices and exchanges of information.
- Support people to acquire workplace skills through "training on the job" subsidies.
- Partner with the schools and college to support the development of skills that lead to occupational certification.

Priority: Certify workers

Actions:
- Identify key occupational categories in which certification is preferred by employers.

Objective 2 con't ...

- Partner with employers and industry to identify required occupational skill competencies.
- Strengthen mechanisms to identify Northerners for apprenticeship programs and to help them enter into them.
- Promote training associated with all types of occupational certification.
- Work with employers to certify and re-certify employees.

Priority: Provide supports related to skills development

Actions:
- Work with the federal government to provide support for clients who are not eligible for employment insurance.
- Provide opportunities for high school students and youth to acquire skills required for the labour market.
- Work with Aboriginal organizations to coordinate efforts.
- Assess barriers to skills development and develop strategies to overcome them.
- Develop specific programs and services to address barriers to enrollment of Northerners in skill development programming.

Objective 3:

A Productive Work Environment

Priority: Develop and monitor labour standards

Actions:
- Update the *Labour Standards Act.*
- Identify and implement efficient procedures for handling labour service issues.

Objective 3 con't ...

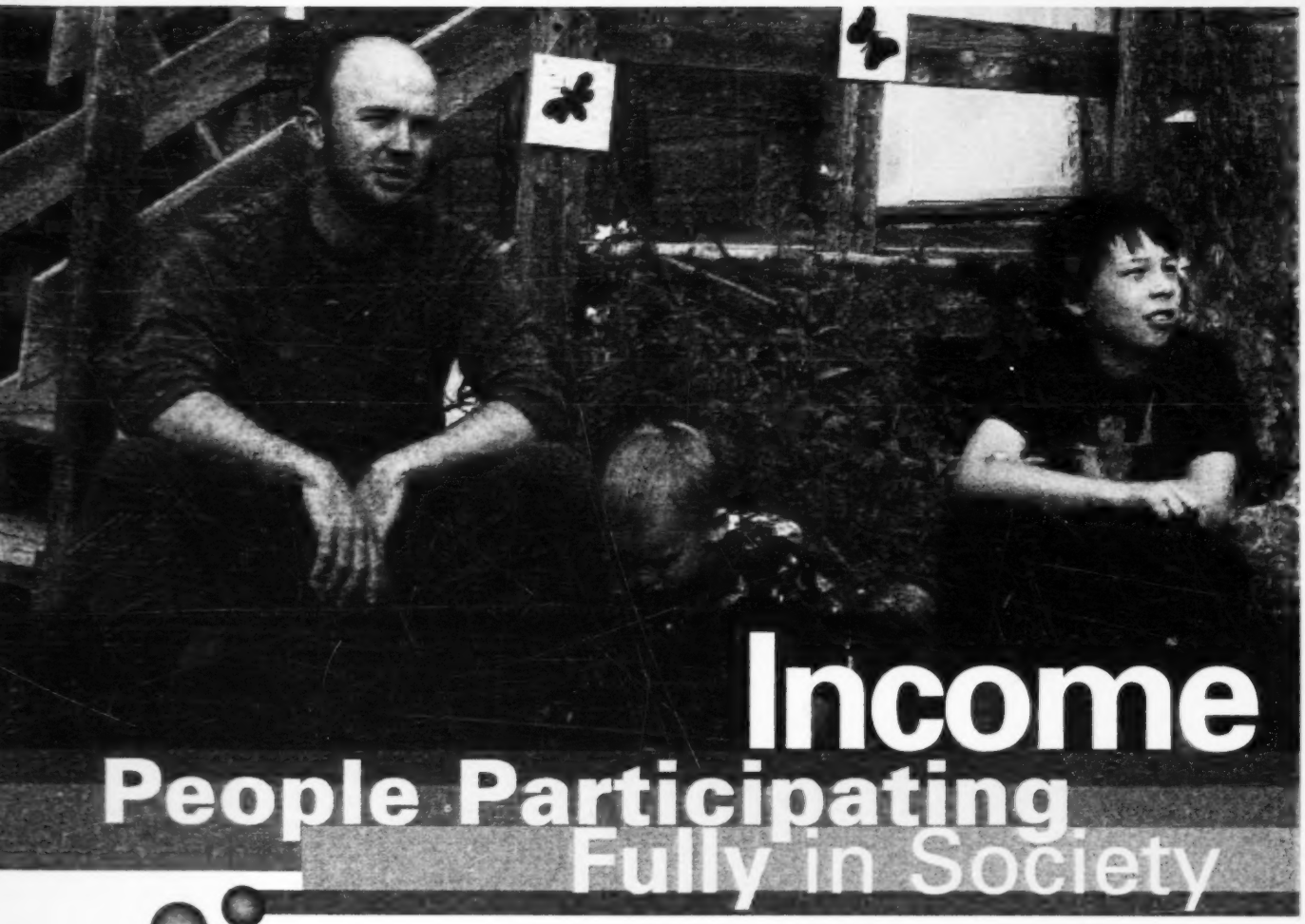
- Promote labour standards and services with employers and employees.

Priority: Work with employers to define human resource requirements

Actions:
- Work with employers and employees to identify and clarify workplace expectations.
- Develop human resource planning frameworks for use by small, and medium employers.
- Support the development and operation of economic sector councils focused on strengthening the skills and abilities in the labour force.
- Work with other provinces and territories to identify key issues and ways in which to collaborate to provide human resource requirements.

Priority: Expand GNWT role in labour

Actions:
- Conduct background research on labour functions of provincial governments and develop a model for GNWT activities in this area.
- Work with industry, employers and labour to identify a framework for increased GNWT involvement in labour matters.
- Examine the possibility of assuming a broader mandate for labour from the federal government with respect to devolution.



Income

People Participating Fully in Society

In the NWT, there is strong enthusiasm about the prospects we have for the future. Continuing development in non-renewable resources, local businesses, tourism and people's education and skills will ensure that the NWT is a prosperous and secure place to live and to raise a family in the years to come. The challenge is to ensure that all Northerners share in this opportunity and prosperity regardless of their circumstances.

The majority of Northerners are self-reliant and have sufficient resources to meet their needs. However, there are also a significant number of persons who require either short or long-term supports to meet their needs. ECE is challenged with providing a comprehensive range of financial support programs for NWT residents in need.

These programs must recognize the importance of family and community in the promotion of self-reliance. Their focus is on helping people to make choices that

Security

are right for them, according to their personal circumstances, efforts, abilities, aspirations and health. We believe that while peoples' circumstances and abilities may vary, their goal is much the same – *participating fully in society.*

Objectives

1. *An Integrated System of Program Supports*
2. *A Comprehensive System of Financial Supports*
3. *A Responsive Income Security System*

People actively participating in community and society to their fullest potential.

21st Century Challenges

Income Levels

The increase in economic activity since 1998 has lead to a higher average income in the Northwest Territories. Between 1995 and 2003, the average employment income in the NWT increased by 23%. The average employment income in small communities increased by 37% during this period. This increase, while remarkable, still places the average employment income in small communities ($25,274) significantly below the NWT average employment income ($41,904).

Although income varies by community type, family structure is one of the primary determinants of family income. The overall number of families with low income was 14.1% in the NWT for 2001 – a decline of 4-6% between 1998 and 2001. Lone parent families account for 34.9% of low income families, while 7.0% of two parent families have low incomes.

Social Conditions

The number of people receiving Income Assistance from the GNWT has declined continuously in the NWT in the past eight years as employment opportunities have increased. While we have experienced an overall decrease in income assistance, we have seen a moderate increase in youth (aged 19 to 29 years of age) who are receiving income assistance. This suggests that there is still work to be done to improve the link between leaving school and joining the world of work.

Household and family structures are also changing in the NWT. The percent of households in the NWT with six or more persons has decreased from 9.8% in 1991 to 7.0% in 2004. This shift has been more pronounced in smaller communities where the percentage has decreased from 23% to 12.7% over that same period. The number of lone parent families has increased from 15.% in 1991 to 21% in 2001. Again, this shift is more pronounced in smaller communities where lone parent families formed 18.7% of the population in 1991 and 28.3% in 2001.

The mobility of Northerners is also changing. A total of 24.9% of NWT residents surveyed in 2001 did not live in the same community as they had five years earlier. This compares to 35.2% in 1991, suggesting that the NWT population is becoming more stable. However, there are differences, based on community size. In Yellowknife in 2001, 30.2% of people

did not live in Yellowknife five years earlier, whereas in smaller communities, only 14.2 % did not live in the same community five years earlier.

Government Supports

The NWT income security system covers a wide range of supports. However, it is complex and can be confusing for NWT residents because different programs have different rules that are not easily understandable. There are currently 17 different income security programs being delivered by seven GNWT departments. The development of these different programs to meet different needs at different times has resulted in a situation where programs:

- Have different definitions of an adequate level of income and what would be considered a basic need.
- Exempt income from different sources when determining eligibility and calculating benefit entitlements.
- Treat people differently based on factors that have little to do with financial need.
- Define "family" in different ways and incorporate different levels of family responsibility.
- Provide payments through a complex web of delivery systems.

"Why do you make it so difficult for people to apply for help? People shouldn't have to fill out so many forms and get the run around from office to office just to get their cheque"

– Survey Respondent

These differences have emerged in spite of the fact that many of these programs started out to accomplish the same goal – to address the needs of lower-income Northerners.

The complexity and inconsistent nature of existing income security programs make it difficult to determine the degree to which these programs are effective. It raises significant questions with respect to their transparency and accountability. It also results in considerable duplication as as different offices document much of the same personal information about applicants. This has given rise to longstanding concerns that the NWT's income security programs as a whole are too complicated.

There is a clear need to rationalize the income security programs under a common policy framework that results in a consistent, fair and respectful method of supporting

those in need. This must be done in a coherent fashion linked to programs and services that provide Northerners with the skills to be self-reliant.

Measuring Success

We will measure our success by the number of Northerners who participate as full citizens in society with limited government support, and by the number of people who successfully move from government support to further education or employment.

Objectives, Priorities and Actions

Objective 1:

An Integrated System of Program Supports

The Departmental focus must provide a range of programs and services to which family and communities can turn for support in time of need.

Priority: Programs linked to expected outcomes

Actions:
- Identify and plan programs with an understanding of services provided by the Government of Canada.
- Identify clear outcomes for GNWT income security programs and services that support people in need.
- Improve the match of programs and benefits with expected outcomes.
- Provide individuals with the opportunity to achieve financial independence and move from dependency to self-sufficiency.

Priority: Strengthen case management

Actions:
- Develop and introduce an integrated case management approach describing how various service providers will work together.
- Implement a case management service audit to identify best practices and make improvements where required.

Objective 2:

A Comprehensive System of Financial Supports

Priority: Access to programs and services

Actions:

- Create one-stop community access centres linked to regional career centres.
- Make greater use of broadband technology to support program delivery in all communities.
- Work with communities and Aboriginal governments to coordinate delivery of programs and services.

Priority: Consolidation and simplification of programs

Actions:

- Assume responsibility for administering the public housing subsidy program.
- Reduce complexity of application processes through program consolidation and application simplification.
- Identify and assume responsibility for other income security programs.
- Publish information on programs and services in a simple format to improve understanding of the purpose, benefits, processes and expectations.
- Expand use of the Case Management and Administration System (CMAS) to assess applicants of other programs offered by the GNWT.

Objective 3:

A Responsive Income Security System

Priority: Comprehensive income security policy

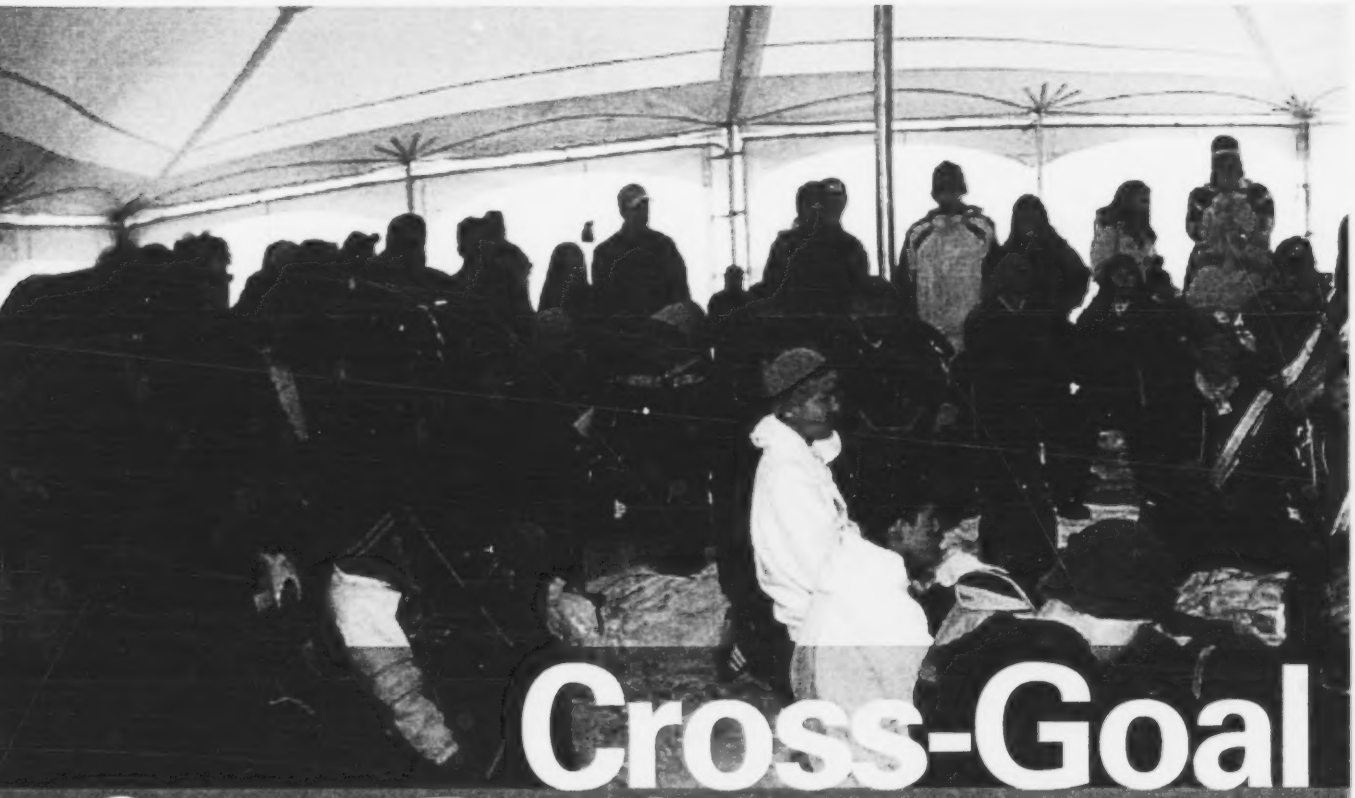
Actions:

- Develop and introduce a common, comprehensive policy for GNWT income security programs.
- Ensure the policy is founded on clear principles including individual, community and government responsibility; respect and dignity; fairness and equity; adequacy; efficiency; effectiveness; accountability and fiscal responsibility.

Priority: Assess the income security system

Actions:

- Develop an approach for reviewing individual programs against the goals and objectives described in the Income Security Policy.
- Develop an approach for reviewing the income security system against the goals and objectives described in the Income Security Policy.
- Develop a process for, and conduct, routine and periodic program compliance audits.
- Report to the public on a regular basis regarding the activities associated with income security programs and services.



Cross-Goal

Strong People... A Strong North

In order for ECE to achieve its goals and objectives, it must take action.

Many of the required actions have been described in the previous sections of this Plan. This section examines these cross-goal strategies and describes our priority activities.

Much of our success over the next decade will depend on strong partnerships, professional and well-trained employees, good information to back up our decisions and planning, monitoring and measuring how and whether we are meeting our goals.

Strategies

Strategies

In this section, we describe the following five strategies that work together across our goals to build on our success within the Department:

1. *Strong and Effective Partnerships*
2. *High Quality Human Resources*
3. *Responsive Information Systems*
4. *Facilities That Match Program Delivery Requirements*
5. *Effective Performance Planning, Monitoring and Measurement*

Strategies, Priorities and Actions

Strategy 1:

Strong and Effective Partnerships

The achievement of our goals and objectives depends on strong, effective partnerships. The establishment of partnerships will allow us to better inform, influence, and reflect one another's priorities and approaches to achieving our goals. These partnerships are in the North and with our communities, Aboriginal organizations, non-government and community-based organizations, parents and families. By working closely with Aboriginal governments and the federal government, and with other provinces and territories, we can coordinate our efforts and resources to collaborate on strategic initiatives that better the lives of Northerners.

Priority: Strengthen local, territorial and federal partnerships, and work collaboratively to address problems and achieve results

Actions:

- Develop a partnership strategy in each of the key areas of the mandate.
- Target and invest in partnerships that provide the most benefit to Northerners.
- Promote public awareness of the partnerships and the roles and responsibilities of the various partners.
- Develop staff skills related to working in partnership with others.
- Celebrate and promote key outcomes of partnerships.

Strategy 2:

High Quality Human Resources

ECE is committed to developing and maintaining a skilled, productive public service that represents the people it serves. During the past decade, we have undertaken a number of successful initiatives to prepare Northerners to work within the Department and its operational agencies, and this has had a positive impact on program and service delivery. However, there is still lots of work to be done to meet current and future challenges and opportunities.

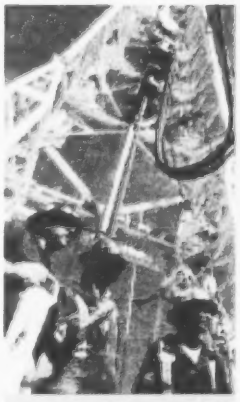
Building an effective workforce within the Department is a complex activity. This will involve training and educating Northerners to work in public service positions such as teachers, college instructors and career counsellors. It will also involve providing in-service training to allow staff to improve, or learn new skills to better deliver the programs and services for which they are responsible.

In addition, the Department has a role in organizing training for people, such as childcare providers, who will work for other organizations. A variety of approaches are required to develop skilled people for different situations.

Priority: Develop a skilled, productive workforce that represents the people it serves.

Actions:

- Develop a human resource strategy tailored to key areas of Departmental responsibility that includes a focus on:
  - Staff with the skills and knowledge necessary to support Department's overall purpose and plan.
  - An organizational culture that clearly identifies and communicates performance expectations, and reports and assesses results.
  - Improved recruitment, training and professional improvement, as well as retention activities to reduce the skills gap.



- Coordinate teacher recruitment with the DEAs, DECs and the commission scolaire francophone de division.
- Work to ensure Northern students and graduates are hired, particularly from the Aurora College Teacher Education Program.
- Identify and develop training and education programs required to prepare Northerners for entry into jobs related to Departmental activities.
- Develop strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal and Northern students in the Aurora College Teacher Education Program.
- Collaborate with the NWT Standing Committee on Teacher Education to ensure that the content of the Aurora College Teacher Education Program is closely linked to the needs of employers.
- Celebrate and promote the quality of our human resources in their service to the public.

Priority: Ensure our staff get the education and training that they need

Actions:
- Increase training and experiential opportunities to improve leadership within ECE, its boards, agencies and associated organizations.
- Maintain and enhance the New Teacher Induction Program to include a focus on cross cultural awareness.
- Increase coordination and collaboration with the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association as well as regional management personnel, in planning and supporting professional improvement for teachers.

Strategy 2 con't ...

- Plan and support skills development among College staff by working with the College to develop a comprehensive approach to instructor development.
- Encourage common professional development opportunities among key partners.
- Expand Departmental staff development opportunities to include training programs related to the new realities of service delivery, such as collaborative management of programs and services, program assessment and evaluation.

Strategy 3:

Responsive Information Systems

Our information systems play an important role in measuring success and supporting effective program and service delivery. They allow us to track, monitor, and report on what we do. They simplify our processes and improve our efficiency. Equally importantly, these systems point to areas requiring change so that we can improve our overall performance.

ECE is committed to the collection, analysis, and provision of information about its programs and services through responsive, reliable systems. These include internal systems that assist in the administration of our programs, and external systems that can be directly accessed by our clients and the general public. Collectively, they help to ensure that the right people get the right information, at the right time and in the right format.

Over the next 10 years, we will strive to use our technology to free up staff to what they do best—working directly with people.

Priority: Simplify processes and improve efficiency utilizing new technology

Actions:

- Improve or expand the capability of internal information systems by focusing on strengthening the Case Management and Administrative System (CMAS) which supports program delivery in the following areas:
  - Apprenticeship
  - Income Assistance
  - Student Financial Assistance
  - Career Development
  - Career Counselling
  - Day Care User Subsidy
  - Day Care Operations
  - Teacher Certification
  - Student Records
  - Seniors Home Heating Subsidy
  - Senior Citizens Supplementary Benefits.

- Integrate new Departmental responsibilities such as Income Security and Labour into the internal information management system.
- Develop an audit and verification module in CMAS that will enable ECE to monitor compliance and improve accountability.
- Conduct an audit of the CMAS system to ensure that it continues to perform as designed and intended.
- Replace various student records systems in use by the education councils and authorities with a single system.

- Design and implement a database repository to capture student record information.
- Expand Web-based information systems and services focusing on the following areas:
  - Virtual Library Project
  - Student Financial Assistance
  - Student Records for teachers and students online
  - Aboriginal Languages Website
  - Museum Website
  - Distance Learning.

- Work with the Department of Public Works and Services and the Chief Information Officer to address bandwidth issues.
- Assess new technologies that could support the work of organizations responsible for revitalizing and enhancing Aboriginal language use and literacy.
- Ensure information about Departmental programs and services on websites is accessible and user friendly.

Strategy 4:

Facilities That Match Program Delivery Requirements

Many of the activities supported by ECE require the availability of suitable facilities. Each year over 13,000 people, more than a quarter of the NWT population, use the various buildings supported by the Department.

ECE currently operates hundreds of millions of dollars worth of facilities. As requirements change over time, it is critical to maintain, adjust and renovate this infrastructure so our programs and services can continue to be successful.

Funding for facilities is expected to be limited during the next decade. As a result, we will need to pay careful attention to identifying priorities, planning of facility design and managing of construction costs.

Priority: Provide suitable facilities for schools and college programming

Actions:

- Identify facilities that need renovation to meet health and safety requirements, the associated costs.
- Identify facilities that need changes to meet emerging program needs, and define those changes.
- Address college residence shortfalls.
- Secure long term solution to college program delivery requirements in Yellowknife.
- Identify opportunities for the College and high schools to share facility space.

Priority: Define and address additional facility requirements

Actions:

- Establish long-term plan for the provision of public library space in communities.

- Complete renovation of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.
- Review contribution policies related to space provision for heritage and childcare facilities.
- Identify and address the requirements for office and other support facilities needed to deliver programs and services.

Strategy 5:

Effective Performance Planning, Monitoring and Measurement

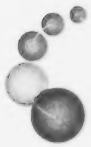
ECE is committed to ensuring that effective planning, monitoring and reporting systems are in place. These help ensure that programs and services are well-managed, that funds are used appropriately and that decision-making is transparent.

The GNWT establishes procedures and processes that ECE must follow in its operations. Activities such as business planning, budgeting and results-reporting, provide a foundation for building an effective performance planning, monitoring and reporting system.

Priority: Confirm program planning and reporting processes

Actions:

- Review and update existing program planning and reporting requirements for education authorities and Aurora College.
- Define mechanisms to share planning and activity information between ECE and its boards and agencies.
- Link and sequence planning and reporting efforts between the ECE and its boards and agencies.



Strategy 5 cont ...

Priority: Create a program evaluation framework and function

Actions:

- Identify employees who will be responsible for coordination of performance measurement and reporting within ECE.
- Establish a plan which includes measurable goals and targets to improve ECE's activities.
- Collaborate on this activity with those in regional, divisional and central agency roles.

Priority: Develop an accountability framework and an indicator report for each of the five main program areas

Actions:

- Develop a results-based management and accountability framework for each of the five main program and service areas.
- Work collaboratively with other GNWT departments on establishing and monitoring key indicators that are common or related to mandates in those departments.
- Expand production of indicator reports which monitor early childhood, schools and postsecondary education to include the remaining three program areas: culture, heritage and languages, employment and labour, and income security.

Conclusion

For more than 20 years ECE has used a Strategic Plan to guide its activities. Such a plan provides an effective overview of the environment in which the Department expects to operate, describes the goals and objectives of the planning period, and establishes the foundation on which programs and services will be organized. It also provides a framework against which the Department's activities can be measured.

Since the completion of the last Departmental strategic plan in 1994, our mandate has changed. The NWT has experienced dramatic economic and social change which has brought broad-ranging opportunities. In order to respond to these changes and opportunities, we needed to revise the Education, Culture and Employment Strategic Plan.

We have spent the past year seeking comments, advice and recommendations regarding the Department, its programs and services. People have told us what they think is working well. They have told us what they feel needs to be improved, and they have suggested how we can become more successful in supporting the needs of all residents of the NWT. We have taken this input, examined how it might fit together and used it to develop this Strategic Plan to guide us for the next 10 years.

This Plan recognizes that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has an important role to play in supporting Northerners as they plan for the future. The Plan recognizes the successes of the past, and them to help shape the directions for the future. The Plan recognizes that we must work closely with our partners to strengthen programs and services with the goal of building success among children, students and adults. Through the goals and objectives outlined in this Plan we intend to invest in the future and support Northerners as they prepare for that future.

Appendices

Appendix A: Who we work with and serve

Our Partners

Partnerships are a key to ECE's success. We have partnered with such groups as district education authorities, Aurora College, childcare providers, community groups, local governments, Aboriginal organizations, private sector businesses, various boards and agencies, other GNWT departments and our provincial and federal colleagues.

ECE would like to acknowledge the partners who have shared, and will continue to share in our vision of people leading fulfilled lives and contributing to a strong and prosperous society:

- Beaufort Delta Divisional Education Council
- Sahtu Divisional Education Council
- Dehcho Divisional Education Council
- Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Board
- South Slave Divisional Education Council
- Yellowknife Catholic School Board
- Yellowknife Education District #1
- commission scolaire francophone de division
- Aurora College
- Aurora Research Institute
- NWT Literacy Council
- NWT Teachers' Association
- Government of Canada
- Local government, Aboriginal organizations, community groups, and various boards and agencies throughout the NWT

Our Clients

Our clients come to us in their earliest years, then continue through school into college or university and beyond. This Plan is for them because our success is their success.

Our Colleagues

The active cooperation of our GNWT colleagues means that we are able to deliver our programs and services efficiently and effectively. We seek their guidance and assistance. We ask them to join us in solving problems. We are grateful that they, too, share in our vision.

Our Staff

Our employees are caring, professional people who embody our values and live our purpose. Because of their dedication and commitment, we will continue to achieve success for the people we serve.

Appendix B: Our Planning Process

In May 2004, ECE began discussions with staff and key stakeholders about the development of a new Strategic Plan to guide our activity over the next decade. The intent of this planning process was to determine:

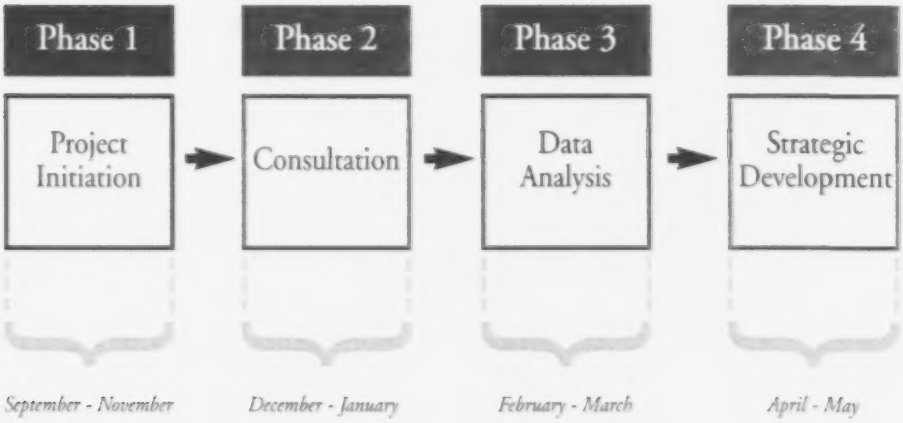
- Whether ECE and its existing mission and mandate were still appropriate to guide its activity, given changes in its structure and operating environment in recent years.
- Whether the Department was headed in the right direction.
- Whether the Department's programs and services were helping to achieve its objectives.
- Whether the Department was organized efficiently and effectively to respond to emerging and changing needs.
- Whether the Department's Human Resource Strategy was sufficient to attract and develop the type of staff necessary to carry out its mandate over the next 10 years.

As the Department began this work, it was guided by the values of:

- Innovation in the solutions we propose to the challenges we face.
- Excellence in the strategies we establish to achieve our goals.
- Leadership in the Plan we develop to serve as a model for others.

Developing Our Process

ECE established its Strategic Planning Project as a four-phase process that began in September 2004.



Project Initiation

During the *Project Initiation Phase*, the Department reviewed approximately 100 background documents relevant to the strategic-planning initiative. These included previous plans, prior consultation documents, statistical reports and best practices from other jurisdictions.

The *Project Initiation Phase* also involved the identification of all project tasks, including the establishment of a project team, a review of program material, the development of survey tools and an evaluation framework, the drafting of a communication plan, consultation schedule, timetable for data analysis and a schedule for review.

Because it was essential that the planning process be informed about the social, economic, political, cultural, technological, and educational environment in which the Department would exist over the next decade, the first step was to conduct an assessment of that environment. The information would come from four main sources:

1. Internal Assessment

The internal assessment involved a review of internal structures, processes and operations to identify strengths and weaknesses. It included a review of the current organizational structure, our people, facilities, technology, management practices and programs and services.

2. External Assessment

The external assessment was useful in identifying changes in the operating environment that could have an impact on the Department over the planning period.

3. Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation with key stakeholders served an important role in identifying changing needs, perceptions, opportunities and emerging community concerns.

4. National Trends

The review of best practices or "national trends" from across the country helped to place the Department's planning exercise in a larger context. The intent was to learn from jurisdictions that had successfully addressed challenges similar to those identified by the Department.

Consultation

During the *Consultation Phase* of the project, the Department invited various partner organizations to participate in the development of the plan. These sessions allowed the Department to engage a broad group of stakeholders in the actual planning process.

Review teams visited 12 NWT communities to seek input on how the Department and its programs and services could better meet local needs. A total of 25 focus group sessions were held and 250 to 300 people were consulted. All regions of the NWT were represented. Participants included all major stakeholders, staff and the public.

Two sessions were held during each community visit: one with the public and one with invited stakeholders. Program review teams developed a series of public consultation guides to focus these discussions.

The next step in the *Consultation Phase* involved surveying various departmental partners. A series of five surveys was distributed to partner organizations and individuals in every community across the NWT asking people to comment on departmental programs and services.

This survey was given to the education community, school boards, postsecondary institutions, early childhood educators, local governments, Aboriginal organizations, members of the arts, culture and heritage community, language groups, industry, social advocacy organizations, program clients, staff and members of the public.

Focus Groups

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Surveys

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Consultation materials were made available to the public in regional offices and on the Department's website. People were also given an opportunity to comment electronically, by mail or fax.

Data Analysis

Thousands of Northerners responded to the invitation to give their views on the issues outlined in the consultation guides. Summarizing the information and ideas was a monumental task. Using a variety of qualitative and quantitative analysis methods and techniques, the strategic planning review team was able to provide highlights of the key themes and directions brought to its attention.

Information from the surveys, focus group sessions, review of prior consultation documents, and review of best practices were used in the development of strategic directions. Themes from each of these four sources of data were developed into working papers for each of the five main program areas. When combined, these 20 working papers provided the substance of the Plan.

In this phase of the project, efforts were made to reach consensus on strategic directions. This was done by reviewing the planning work, considering the results of stakeholder input sessions, and assessing and validating potential strategic directions. By the end of this phase of the project, the strategic planning review team was better able to:

- Understand conditions in the operating environment.
- Define the critical issues to which ECE must respond.
- Clarify what ECE wants to become.
- Confirm the vision, purpose, values.
- Develop goals and objectives for the planning period.

Strategy Development

During the *Strategy Development Phase* of the project, the Department described how it would establish priorities for action and commit its resources to accomplishing the identified goals and objectives. Priorities were seen as fitting into the business planning process and were expected to serve as a link between long-term and annual planning. This phase of the project was essential because it was the point at which the Department developed vision statements describing how it intended to respond to major challenges.

In developing the Strategic Plan, the Department paid particular attention to:

- Describing its purpose in terms of goals, objectives, and strategies.
- Identifying its strengths and weaknesses and how it would respond to opportunities and threats in its environment.
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of headquarters, regional offices, and partner organizations.
- Drafting an expression of the Department's strategic intent.
- Describing resource reallocations and funding requirements.
- Broadening ownership and building a shared vision of the future.

The next step was the development of strategic goals consistent with the vision statement. These broad statements of what ECE hopes to achieve are outcomes or results-focused. The next step in the planning process was the development of strategies for each goal. These are statements of approach or a method for attaining goals. A strategy was judged effective if it did one or more of the following:

- Took advantage of opportunities.
- Defended against threats.
- Leveraged organizational competencies.
- Corrected organizational shortcomings.
- Offered some basis for future competitive advantage.
- Counteracted forces eroding current competitive position.

The final step was the development of annual objectives consistent with the Strategic Plan goals and objectives. Objectives are specific, measurable, accountable, results-based, and time sensitive statements of what will be done to achieve a goal.

An important feature of the Plan's development was the establishment of a detailed provision for evaluating the progress ECE was making toward meeting its objectives. ECE has provided for regular evaluations and appropriate revision of the Plan, followed by widespread dissemination and discussion of the results of the evaluations.

Appendix C: Linking Our Plan with Others

ECE and its programs and services contribute to and support the strategic goals established by the GNWT in *Self-reliant People, Communities and the Northwest Territories: A Shared Responsibility.*

GNWT Goal: A strong northern voice and identity

The ECE goal of *Pride in our Culture* is linked directly to this goal. Through actions such as culture-based education in the school system, language programs, and supports for the arts, ECE activities emphasize and celebrate personal and community identity.

GNWT Goal: Healthy, educated people living in safe communities

The ECE goal of *Education of Children and Youth* incorporates actions to support effective parenting early childhood development and literacy. It incorporates actions to support student success in literacy and numeracy, as well as to promote positive lifestyle choices. Activities also prepare high school students for postsecondary experiences, community life and participation in the labour force.

The ECE goals of *Education of Adults* and *A Skilled and Productive Workforce* ensure that learning and preparation for the labour force are a continuous process that allows residents can to build their knowledge and skills throughout their lives.

Finally, the new ECE goal of *People Participating Fully in Society* incorporates necessary program restructuring and amalgamation to ensure that programming in the income security field is effective and consistent while supporting the critical goal of individual and family self-reliance.

GNWT Goal: Well-governed, sustainable communities and regions

Through its program delivery structure that includes divisional education councils, district education authorities, Aurora College and regional offices, ECE is able to strengthen

community capacity to make decisions and direct the education system. This structure includes the delegation of well-developed authorities and responsibilities and mechanisms for regular reporting of results to the public.

GNWT Goal: A diversified economy providing opportunity and choice

Two ECE goals support this GNWT goal. First, the revised Departmental goal of *A Skilled and Productive Workforce* incorporates the strengthened focus on employment and labour to support both employers and employees. Second, the ECE goal of *Education of Adults* includes the provision of Adult Literacy and Basic Education as well as postsecondary education and training programs to prepare Northerners for the opportunities offered by a growing NWT economy.

GNWT Goal: Care and protection of the natural environment

Through the NWT school system and postsecondary education programs, Northerners learn about environmental protection and sustainable development. These efforts help to foster respect for the natural environment.

Appendix D: Measuring Our Success

Are we making progress? Have we accomplished what we set out to do? Our Strategic Plan will help us answer these important questions. It will translate our vision into tangible outcomes, and serve as a blueprint to keep us on track toward the attainment of our goals.

Within each of our five goals, we identified three objectives to work toward in the months and years ahead. Performance indicators will chart progress toward our goals, and provide the link in our activity-to-objective-to-goal chain.

Early on in the planning period, we will finalize a results-based management and accountability framework and an annual action plan for each of its five program areas.

Goals	Objectives	
	Preservation of Our Heritage	Number of Heritage Sites/Artifacts Preserved/Promoted
	Promotion of the Arts	Number and Type of Cultural Activities Supported
	Support and Promotion of Our Official Languages	Language Use
2. Education of Children and Youth	A Strong Foundation for Learning	EDI Test Results
	Students Achieving Their Potential	Graduation Rate
	A Results-based Education System	Functional Grade Level Assessment
3. Education of Adults	Access and Choice for Adult Learners	Range of Opportunities for Adult Learners
	A Responsive College	Integration of Aurora College graduates into further education or employment
	An Integrated Adult Learning Network	Completion/Graduation Rate by Type of Post-secondary Program
4. A Skilled and Productive Workforce	Northerners Making Informed Career Choices	Number of Career Services Accessed/Provided
	A Skilled Workforce	Number of Apprentices and Certified Workers
	A Productive Work Environment	Number of Occupations with Labour Shortages and Number of Labour Complaints
	An Integrated System of Program Supports	Time on Assistance
	A Comprehensive System of Financial Supports	Client Interaction survey
	A Responsive Income Security System	Case Load/Benefit Levels/Expenditures

Appendix D: Measuring Our Success

Are we making progress? Have we accomplished what we set out to do? Our Strategic Plan will help us answer these important questions. It will translate our vision into tangible outcomes, and serve as a blueprint to keep us on track toward the attainment of our goals.

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Early on in the planning period, we will finalize a results-based management and accountability framework and an annual action plan for each of its five program areas.

Goals	Objectives	Indicators
1. Pride in Our Heritage	Preservation of Our Heritage	Number of Heritage Sites/Artifacts Preserved/Promoted
	Promotion of the Arts	Number and Type of Cultural Activities Supported
	Support and Promotion of Our Official Languages	Language Use
2. Education of Children and Youth	A Strong Foundation for Learning	EDI Test Results
	Students Achieving Their Potential	Graduation Rate
	A Results-based Education System	Functional Grade Level Assessment
3. Education of Adults	Access and Choice for Adult Learners	Range of Opportunities for Adult Learners
	A Responsive College	Integration of Aurora College graduates into further education or employment
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4. A Skilled and Productive Workforce	Northerners Making Informed Career Choices	Number of Career Services Accessed/Provided
	A Skilled Workforce	Number of Apprentices and Certified Workers
	A Productive Work Environment	Number of Occupations with Labour Shortages and Number of Labour Complaints
5. People Participating Fully in Society	An Integrated System of Program Supports	Time on Assistance
	A Comprehensive System of Financial Supports	Client Interaction survey
	A Responsive Income Security System	Case Load/Benefit Levels/Expenditures

Linking Strategic Planning to Annual Planning

The goals identified in this Strategic Plan are linked to our annual business planning process. The business plan describes the activities and resources we will put toward achieving our strategic goals and objectives each year, and this will in turn influence the progress we make toward achieving our goals.

If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

Si vous désirez ces renseignement dans une autre langue officielle,
veuillez communiquer avec nous.

Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ā nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwēsinēn.

Thı̨chǫ yati k'ę̀ę̀. Di wegodi newǫ dè, gots'o gonede.

Ɂerihtł'ís dëne sųłiné yati t'a huts'elkër xa beyéyati theɂą ɂat'e, nuwe ts'ën yółti.

Edi gondı dehgéh got'ı̨e zhatié k'ę́ę́ edatł'éh enahddhę nide.

K'éhshó got'ı̨ne xədǝ́ k'é hederi ɂedı̨htl'é yeriniwę nídé dúle.

Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vat'atr'ijąhch'uu zhit yinohthan jì', diits'àt ginohkhìi.

UVANITTUAQ ILITCHURISUKUPKU INUVIALUKTUN, QUQUAQLUTA.

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Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Shawn McCann
Manager of Public Affairs
Education, Culture and Employment
Government of the Northwest Territories
(867) 920-6222
Shawn_McCann@gov.nt.ca

Education, Culture and Employment

Government of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife, NT Canada X1A 2L9 • www.ece.gov.nt.ca